Memoirs of Mistral

MEMOIRS OF MISTRAL

BOOKS BY

CONSTANCE E. MAUD

AN ENGLISH GIRL IN PARIS
Tenth Thousand

MY FRENCH FRIENDS

THE RISING GENERATION

FELICITY IN FRANCE
Fourth Edition

WAGNER'S HEROES
Illustrated by H. G. Fell
Sixth Impression,

WAGNER'S HEROINES
Illustrated by W. T. Maud.
Third Impression

MEMOIRS OF MISTRAL

RENDERED INTO ENGLISH BY

CONSTANCE ELISABETH MAUD

Ich singe wie der Vogel singt
Der in den Zweigen wohnet
Das Lied, das aus der Kehle dringt
Ist Lohn, der reichlich lohnet.
GOETHE.

LYRICS FROM THE PROVENÇAL BY

ALMA STRETTELL

(MRS. LAWRENCE HARRISON)

ILLUSTRATED

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TO MY FRIEND

THÉRÈSE ROUMANILLE

(MADAME BOISSIÈRE)

I DEDICATE THIS ENGLISH RENDERING OF MISTRAL'S MEMOIRS
AND TALES, WHICH WITHOUT HER KINDLY ASSISTANCE
I SHOULD NOT HAVE UNDERTAKEN, FOR TO HER
I OWE ALL I KNOW OF THE LITERARY AND
PATRIOTIC WORK OF THE FÉLIBRES
AND OF THE REAL LIFE OF
PROVENCE

PREFACE

It was one lovely day in early spring two years ago that, on the occasion of a visit to the great poet of Provence, I first heard of these Memories of his youth.

Mistral had been for many years collecting and editing material for this volume, and was at the moment just completing a French translation from the Provençal original, which he laughingly assured us he was glad we had interrupted, since he found it *un travail brute.*

The enthusiastic reception accorded to this French edition, not only in Paris but throughout the reading world of France, encourages me to think that perhaps in England, also, considering the increased interest caused by the *entente cordiale* in all things concerning France, an English translation of this unique description of Provençal country life sixty years ago may be welcome; and in America too, where the name and life-work of Mistral have always been better known than in England.

The fact that Mistral and his great collaborators in the Félibre movement, Roumanille, Aubanel, Félix Gras, Anselme Mathieu and others, wrote entirely in the language of their beloved Provence, no doubt accounts for their works being so little known outside their own country, though latterly the name of Mistral has been brought prominently forward by his election as a recipient last year of the Nobel Prize for patriotic literature, and also by his refusal to accept a Chair among the Olympians of the French Academy. In spite of his rejection of the latter honour, which was a matter of principle, he could scarcely fail to have been gratified by the compliment paid in offering to him what is never offered without being first solicited, the would-be member being obliged to present himself for election and also to endeavour personally to win the support of each of the sacred Forty.

Of all Mistral's works his first epic poem, *Mireille*, is the best known outside France, chiefly no doubt because the invincible charm and beauty of this work make themselves felt even through the imperfect medium of a prose translation, and partly perhaps because Gounod gave it a certain vogue by adapting it as the libretto for his opera of *Mireille*.

President Roosevelt has shown his appreciation

not only of *Mireille* but of the life-work of the author in the following letter, a French translation of which is to be seen framed in Mistral's Provençal Museum at Arles.

WHITE HOUSE, WASHINGTON,
December 15, 1904.

MY DEAR M. MISTRAL,—Mrs. Roosevelt and I were equally pleased with the book and the medal, and none the less because for nearly twenty years we have possessed a copy of *Mireille*. That copy we shall keep for old association's sake; though this new copy with the personal inscription by you must hereafter occupy the place of honour.

All success to you and your associates! You are teaching the lesson that none need more to learn than we of the West, we of the eager, restless, wealth-seeking nation; the lesson that after a certain not very high level of material well-being has been reached, then the things that really count in life are the things of the spirit. Factories and railways are good up to a certain point; but courage and endurance, love of wife and child, love of home and country, love of lover for sweetheart, love of beauty in man's work and in nature, love and emulation of daring and of lofty endeavour, the homely workaday virtues

and the heroic virtues—these are better still, and if they are lacking no piled-up riches, no roaring, clanging industrialism, no feverish and many-sided activity shall avail either the individual or the nation. I do not undervalue these things of a nation's body; I only desire that they shall not make us forget that beside the nation's body there is also the nation's soul.

Again thanking you, on behalf of both of us,

Believe me

Very faithfully yours,

THEODORE ROOSEVELT.

To M. Frédéric Mistral.

The Nobel Prize has been devoted to the same patriotic cause as that to which the poet has invariably consecrated everything he possesses. In this instance the gift from Sweden has gone towards the purchase of an ancient palace in Arles, which in future will be the Félibréan Museum, the present hired building being far too small for the purpose. The object of the museum is to be for all times a record and storehouse of Provençal history, containing the weapons, costumes, agricultural implements, furniture, documents, &c., dating from the most ancient times up to the present day.

The Memoirs, which Monsieur Mistral defines as "Mes Origines," end with the publication of his *Mireille* in the year 1859 at the age of twenty-eight. He adds as a supplement a chapter written some three years later, a souvenir of Alphonse Daudet (also among the prophets), which gives a picture of the way these youthful poet-patriots practised the Gai-Savoir in the spring-time and heyday of their lives.

I have added also a short summary translated from the writings of Monsieur Paul Mariéton, which brings the history of Félibrige and its Capoulié up to the present date.

CONSTANCE ELISABETH MAUD.

CHELSEA, *June* 1907.

CONTENTS

CHAP.		PAGE
I.	Childhood at Maillane	1
II.	My Father	24
III.	The Magi Kings	32
IV.	Nature's School	45
V.	At St. Michel de Frigolet	61
VI.	At Monsieur Millet's School	80
VII.	Three Early Félibres	104
VIII.	How I took My Degree	120
IX.	Dame Riquelle and the Republic of 1848	131
X.	Mademoiselle Louise	147
XI.	The Return to the Farm	165
XII.	Font-Ségugne	185
XIII.	"The Provençal Almanac"	198
XIV.	Journey to Les Saintes-Maries	235
XV.	Jean Roussière	250
XVI.	"Mireille"	270
XVII.	The Revels of Trinquetaille	286
	Appendix	307
	Mistral's Poems in the Provençal	324

ILLUSTRATIONS

	To face page
Frédéric Mistral	*Frontispiece*
Mas du Juge—Birthplace of Frédéric Mistral . . .	18
Mistral in 1864	60
Arlesiennes at Maillane	84
Joseph Roumanille	106
Anselm Mathieu	158
Théodore Aubanel	158
Mas des Pommiers—Home of Joseph Roumanille . . .	188
Madame Frédéric Mistral, First Queen of the Félibres .	196
Félix Gras, Poet and Félibre	202
Mistral and his dog Pan-Perdu	226
Thérèse Roumanille (Madame Boissière), Second Queen of the Félibres	266
Paul Mariéton, Chancelier des Félibres	307
Madame Gasquet (*née* Mlle. Girard), Third Queen of the Félibres	318
Madame Bischoffsheim (*née* Mlle. de Chevigney), Fourth and present Queen of the Félibres	326

MEMOIRS OF MISTRAL

CHAPTER I

CHILDHOOD AT MAILLANE

As far back as I can remember I see before me, towards the south, a barrier of mountains, whose slopes, rocks and gorges stand out in the distance with more or less clearness according to the morning or evening light. It is the chain of the Alpilles, engirdled with olive-trees like a wall of classic ruins, a veritable belvedere of bygone glory and legend.

It was at the foot of this rampart that Caius Marius, Saviour of Rome, and to this day a popular hero throughout the land, awaited the barbarian hordes behind the walls of his camp. The record of his triumphs and trophies engraved on the Arch and Mausoleum of Saint-Rémy has been gilded by the sun of Provence for two thousand years past.

On the slopes of these hills are to be seen the

remains of the great Roman aqueduct, which once carried the waters of Vaucluse to the Arena of Arles; an aqueduct still called by the country people Ouide di Sarrasin (stonework of the Saracens), for it was by this waterway the Spanish Moors marched to Arles. On the jagged rocks of these Alpilles the Princes of Baux built their stronghold, and in these same aromatic valleys, at Baux, Romanin, and Roque-Martine, the beautiful châtelaines in the days of the troubadours held their Courts of Love.

It is at Mont-Majour, on the plains of the Camargue, that the old Kings of Arles sleep beneath the flag-stones of the cloisters, and in the grotto of the Vallon d'Enfer of Cordes that our fairies still wander, while among these ruins of old Roman and feudal days the Golden Goat lies buried.

My native village, Maillane, facing the Alpilles, holds the middle of the plain, a wide fertile plain, still called in Provençal, "Le Caieou," no doubt in memory of the Consul Caius Marius.

An old worthy of this district, "a famous wrestler known as the little Maillanais," once assured me that in all his travels throughout the length and breadth of Languedoc and Provence never had he seen a plain so smooth as this one

of ours. For if one ploughed a furrow straight as a die for forty miles from the Durance river down to the sea, the water would flow without hindrance owing to the steady gradient. And, in spite of our neighbours treating us as frog-eaters, we Maillanais always agree there is not a prettier country under the sun than ours.

The old homestead where I was born, looking towards the hills and adjoining the Clos-Créma, was called "the Judge's Farm." We worked the land with four yoke of oxen, and kept a head-carter, several ploughmen, a shepherd, a dairy-woman whom we called "the Aunt," besides hired men and women engaged by the month according to the work of the season, whether for the silk-worms, the hay, the weeding, the harvest and vintage, the season of sowing, or that of olive gathering.

My parents were yeomen, and belonged to those families who live on their own land and work it from one generation to another. The yeomen of the country of Arles form a class apart, a sort of peasant aristocracy, which, like every other, has its pride of caste. For whilst the peasant of the village cultivates with spade and hoe his little plot of ground, the yeoman farmer, agriculturist on a large scale of the Camargue and the Crau,

also puts his hand to the plough as he sings his morning song.

If we Mistrals wish, like so many others, to boast of our descent, without presumption we may claim as ancestors the Mistrals of Dauphiny, who became by alliance Seigneurs of Montdragon and also of Romanin. The celebrated monument shown at Valence is the tomb of these Mistrals. And at Saint-Rémy, the home of my family and birthplace of my father, the Hôtel of the Mistrals of Romanin may still be seen, known by the name of the Palace of Queen Joan.

The crest of the Mistrals is three clover leaves with the somewhat audacious device, "All or Nothing." For those who, like ourselves, read a horoscope in the fatality of patronymics and the mystery of chance encounters, it is a curious coincidence to find in the olden days the Love Court of Romanin united to the Manor of the Mistrals, and the name of Mistral designating the great wind of the land of Provence, and lastly, these three trefoils significantly pointing to the destiny of our family. The trefoil, so I was informed by the Sâr Peladan, when it has four leaves becomes a talisman, but with three expresses symbolically the idea of the indigenous plant, development and growth by slow degrees in the same spot. The number three

signifies also the household, father, mother, and son in the mystic sense. Three trefoils, therefore, stand for three successive harmonious generations, or nine, which number in heraldry represents wisdom. The device "All or Nothing" is well suited to those sedentary flowers which will not bear transplanting and are emblematic of the enured landholder.

But to leave these trifles. My father, who lost his first wife, married again at the age of fifty-five, and I was the offspring of this second marriage. It was in the following manner my parents met each other:

One summer's day on the Feast of St. John, Master François Mistral stood in the midst of his cornfields watching the harvesters as they mowed down the crop with their sickles. A troop of women followed the labourers, gleaning the ears of corn which escaped the rake. Among them my father noticed one, a handsome girl, who lingered shyly behind as though afraid to glean like the rest. Going up to her he inquired: "Who are you, pretty one? What is your name?"

"I am the daughter of Étienne Poulinet," the young girl replied, "the Mayor of Maillane. My name is Delaïde."

"Does the daughter of Master Poulinet, Mayor of Maillane, come, then, to glean?" asked my father in surprise.

"Sir, we are a large family," she answered, "six daughters and two sons; and our father, though he is fairly well off, when we ask him for pocket-money to buy pretty clothes, tells us we must go and earn it. That is why I have come here to glean."

Six months after this meeting, which recalls the old biblical scene between Ruth and Boaz, the brave yeoman asked the Mayor of Maillane for his daughter's hand in marriage; and I was born of their union.

My entry into the world took place on September 8th, 1830. My father, according to his wont, was that afternoon in his fields when they sent from the house to announce my arrival. The messenger, so soon as he came within hearing, called to him: "Master, come—the mistress is just delivered."

"How many?" asked my father.

"One, my faith—a fine son."

"A son, may God make him good and wise."

And without another word, as though nothing had happened out of the ordinary, the good man

went on with his work, and not until it was finished did he return slowly to the house. This did not indicate that he lacked heart, but, brought up in the Roman traditions of the old Provençeaux, his manners possessed the external ruggedness of his ancestors.

I was baptized Frédéric, in memory, it appears, of a poor little urchin who, at the time of the courtship between my parents, was employed in carrying to and fro their love missives, and died shortly after. My birthday having fallen on Our Lady's Day, in September, my mother had desired to give me the name of Nostradamus, both in gratitude to Our Lady and in memory of the famous astrologer of Saint-Rémy, author of "Les Centuries." But this mystic and mythical name which the maternal instinct had so happily lit upon was unfortunately refused both by the mayor and the priest.

Vaguely, as through a distant mist, it seems to me I can remember those early years when my mother, then in the full glory of her youth and beauty, nourished me with her milk and bore me in her arms, presenting with pride among our friends "her king"; and ceremoniously the friends and relations receiving us with the customary congratulations, offering me a couple of

eggs, a slice of bread, a pinch of salt, and a match, with these sacramental words :

" Little one, be full as an egg, wholesome as bread, wise as salt, and straight as a match."

Perhaps some will think it childish to relate these things. But after all every one is free to tell their own tale, and I find great pleasure in returning, in thought, to my first swaddling clothes, my cradle of mulberry wood, and my wheel-cart, for there I revive the sweetest joys of my young mother.

When I was six months old I was released from the bands which swathed me, Nanounet, my grandmother, having strongly counselled that I should be kept tightly bound for this period. " Children well swathed," said she, " are neither bandy-legged nor knock-kneed."

On St. Joseph's Day, according to the custom of Provence, I was " given my feet." Triumphantly my mother bore me to the church of Maillane, and there on the saint's altar, while she held me by the skirts and my godmother sang to me " Avène, avène, avène " (Come, come, come), I was made to take my first steps.

Every Sunday we went to Maillane for the Mass. It was at least two miles distant. All the way my mother rocked me in her arms. Oh,

how I loved to rest on that tender breast, in that soft nest! But a time came, I must have been five years old, when midway to the village my poor mother put me down, bidding me walk, for I was too heavy to be carried any more.

After Mass I used to go with my mother to visit my grandparents in the fine vaulted kitchen of white stone, where usually congregated the notabilities of the place, Monsieur Deville, Monsieur Dumas, Monsieur Raboux, the younger Rivière, and discussed politics as they paced the stone-flagged floor to and fro between the fireplace and the dresser.

Monsieur Dumas, who had been a judge and resigned in the year 1830, was specially fond of giving his advice to the young mothers present, such as these words of wisdom, for example, which he repeated regularly every Sunday :

" Neither knives, keys, or books should be given to children—for with a knife the child may cut himself, a key he may lose, and a book he may tear."

Monsieur Dumas did not come alone : with his opulent wife and their eleven or twelve children they filled the parlour, the fine ancestral parlour, all hung with Marseilles tapestry on which were represented little birds and baskets of flowers.

There, to show off the fine education of his progeny, proudly he made them declaim, verse by verse, a little from one, a little from another, the story of Théramène.

This accomplished, he would turn to my mother:

"And your young one, Delaïde—do you not teach him to recite something?"

"Yes," replied my mother simply; "he can say the little rhyme of 'Jean du Porc.'"

"Come, little one, recite 'Jean du Porc,'" cried every one to me.

Then with a bow to the company I would timidly falter:

Quau es mort?—Jan dóu Porc.
Quau lou plouro?—Lou rei Mouro.
Quau lou ris?—La perdris.
Quau lou canto?—La calandro.
Quau ié viro à brand?—Lou quiéu de la sartan.
Quau n'en porto dòu?—Lou quiéu dóu peiròu.*

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*JINGLE OF JOHN O' THE PIG'S HEAD.

Come tell me, who is dead?—
'Tis John o' the Pig's Head.
And who his dirge doth sing?—
Why, 'tis the Moorish King.
And who laughs o'er him now?
The partridge doth, I trow.

It was with these nursery rhymes, songs, and tales that our parents in those days taught us the good Provençal tongue. But at present, vanity having got the upper hand in most families, it is with the system of the worthy Monsieur Dumas that children are taught, and little nincompoops are turned out who have no more attachment or root in their country than foundlings, for it's the fashion of to-day to abjure all that belongs to tradition.

It is now time that I said a little of my maternal grandfather, the worthy goodman Étienne. He was, like my father, yeoman farmer, of an old family and a good stock, but with this difference, that whereas the Mistrals were workers, economists and amassers of wealth, who in all the country had not their like, the Poulinets were careless and happy-go-lucky, disliked hard work, let the water run and spent their harvests. My grandsire Étienne was, in short, a veritable Roger Bontemps.*

Who makes a lay for him that's gone ?—
The mangle with its creaking stone.
Who was it that his knell began ?—
The bottom of the frying-pan.
Who wears for him a mourning veil ?—
The kettle's sooty tail !

* A legendary character renowned as a spendthrift.

In spite of having eight children, six of whom were girls, directly there was a fête anywhere, he was off with his boon companions for a three days' spree. His outing lasted as long as his crowns; then, adaptive as a glove, his pockets empty, he returned to the house. Grandmother Nanon, a godly woman, would greet him with reproaches:

"Art thou not ashamed, profligate, to devour the dowries of thy daughters?"

"Hé, goodie! What need to worry! Our little girls are pretty, they will marry without dowries. And I fear me, as thou sayest, my good Nanon, we shall have nothing for the last."

Thus teasing and cajolling the good woman, he made the usurers give him mortgages on her dowry, lending him money at the rate of fifty or a hundred per cent., and when his gambling friends came round to visit him at sundown the incorrigible scapegraces would make a carouse in the chimney corner, singing all in unison:

"We are three jolly fellows who haven't a sou."

There were times when my poor grandmother well-nigh despaired at seeing, one by one, the best portions of her inheritance disappear, but he would laugh at her fears:

"Why, goosey, cry about a few acres of land, they are common as blackberries," or:

"That land, why, my dear, its returns did not pay the taxes."

And again: "That waste there? Why it was dry as heather from our neighbours' trees."

He had always a retort equally prompt and light-hearted. Even of the usurers he would say:

"My faith, but it is a happy thing there are such people. Without them, how should we spendthrifts and gamblers find the needful cash at a time when money is merchandise?"

In those days Beaucaire with its famous fair was the great point of attraction on the Rhône. People of all nations, even Turks and negroes, journeyed there both by land and water. Everything made by the hand of man, whether to feed, to clothe, to house, to amuse or to ensnare, from the grindstones of the mill, bales of cloth or canvas, rings and ornaments made of coloured glass, all were to be found in profusion at Beaucaire, piled up in the great vaulted storehouses, the market-halls, the merchant vessels in the harbour or the booths in the meadows. It was a universal exhibition held yearly in the month of July of all the industries of the south.

Needless to say, my grandsire took good care never to miss this occasion of going to Beaucaire for four or five days' dissipation. Under the pretext of purchasing articles for the household—such as pepper, cloves, ginger—he went off to the fair, a handkerchief in every pocket and others new and uncut wound like a belt round his waist, for he consumed much snuff. There he strolled about from morn till eve among the jugglers, the mountebanks, the clowns, and, above all, the gypsies, watching these last with interest as they disputed and squabbled over the purchase of some skinny donkey.

Punch and Judy possessed perennial joys for him. Open-mouthed he stood among the crowd, laughing like a boy at the old jokes, and experiencing an unholy joy as the blows were showered on the puppets representing law and order.

This was always the chance for the watchful pickpocket to quietly abstract one by one his handkerchiefs, a thing foreseen by my grandsire, who, on discovering the loss, invariably, without more ado, unwound his belt and used the new ones, with the result that on returning home he presented himself to his family with a nose dyed blue from the unwashed cotton.

"So I see," cries my grandmother, "they have stolen your handkerchiefs again."

"Who told you that?" asks her good man in surprise.

"Your blue nose," answers she.

"Well, that Punch and Judy show was worth it," maintains the incorrigible grandsire.

When his daughters, of whom, as I have said, my mother was one, were of an age to marry, being neither awkward nor disagreeable, in spite of their lack of dowry, suitors appeared on the scene. But when the fathers of these youths inquired of my grandsire how much he was prepared to give to his daughter, Master Étienne fired up in wrath:

"How much do I give my daughter? Idiot! I give your lad a fine young filly, well trained and handled, and you ask me to add lands and money! Who wants my daughters must take them as they are or leave them. God be thanked, in the bread-pan of Master Étienne there is always a loaf."

It was a fact that each one of the six daughters of my grandfather were married for the sake of their fine eyes only, and made good marriages too.

"A pretty girl," says the proverb, "carries her dowry in her face."

But I must not leave this budding time of my childhood without plucking one more of memory's blooms.

Behind the Judge's Farm where I was born there was a moat, the waters of which supplied our old draw-well. The water, though not deep, was clear and rippling, and on a summer's day the place was to me one of irresistible attraction.

The draw-well moat! It was the book in which, while amusing myself, I learnt my first lessons in natural history. There were fish, both stickleback and young carp, which, as they passed down the stream in shoals, I endeavoured to catch with a small canvas bag that had once served for nails, suspended on a long reed. There were little dragon-flies, green, blue, and black, who, as they alighted on the reeds gently, oh so gently, I seized with my small fingers—that is when they did not escape me, lightly and silently, with a shimmer of their gauzy wings; there also was to be found a kind of brown insect with a white belly which leaped in the water and moved his tiny paws like a cobbler at work. Little frogs too, with dark gold-spotted backs showing among the tufts of moss, and who, on seeing me, nimbly plunged in the stream; and the triton, a sort of aquatic salamander, who wriggled round

in a circle; and great horned beetles, those scavengers of the pools, called by us the "eel-killers."

Add to all these a mass of aquatic plants, such as the cats-tail, that long cottony blossom of the typha-plant; and the water-lily, its wide round leaves and white cup magnificently outspread on the water's smooth surface; the gladiole with its clusters of pink flowers and the pale narcissus mirrored in the stream; the duckweed with its minute leaves; the ox-tongue, which flowers like a lustre; and the forget-me-not, myosotis, named in Provence "eyes of the Child Jesus."

But of all this wonder-world, what held my fancy most was the water-iris, a large plant growing at the water's edge in big clumps, with long sword-shaped leaves and beautiful yellow blooms raising high their heads like golden halberds. The golden lilies, which on an azure field form the arms of France and of Provence, were undoubtedly suggested by these same water-iris, for the lily and the iris are really of the same family, and the azure of the coat-of-arms faithfully represents the water by the edge of which the iris grows.

It was a summer's day, about the harvest time. All the people of the farm-house were out at work, helping to bind up the sheaves. Some twenty

men, bare-armed, marched by twos and fours, round the horses and mules who were treading hard. Some took off the ears of corn or tossed the straw with their long wooden forks, while others, bare-foot, danced gaily in the sunshine on the fallen grain. High in the air, upheld by the three supports of a rustic crane, the winnowing cradle was suspended. A group of women and girls with baskets threw the corn and husks into the net of the sieve, and the master, my father, vigorous and erect, swung the sieve towards the wind, turning the bad grains on to the top. When the wind abated or at intervals ceased, my father, with the motionless sieve in his hands, facing the wind and gazing out into the blue, would say in all seriousness, as though addressing a friendly god: "Come, blow, blow, dear wind."

And I have seen the "mistral," on my word, in obedience to the wish of the patriarch, again and again draw breath, thus carrying off the refuse while the blessed fine wheat fell in a white shower on the conical heap visibly rising in the midst of the winnowers.

At sunset, after the grain had been heaped up with shovels, and the men, all powdered with dust, had gone off to wash at the well and draw water for the beasts, my father with great strides

Mas du Juge—Birthplace of Frédéric Mistral.

would measure the heap of corn, tracing upon it a cross with the handle of the spade and uttering the words: "God give thee increase."

I must have been scarcely four years old and still wearing petticoats, when one lovely afternoon during this threshing season, after rolling as children love to do in the new straw, I directed my steps towards the draw-well moat.

For some days past the fair water-iris had commenced to open, and my hands tingled to pluck some of the lovely golden buds.

Arrived at the stream, gently I slipped down to the edge of the water and thrust out my hand to grab the flower, but it was too far off; I stretched, and behold me in an instant up to the neck in water.

I cried out. My mother hurried to the rescue, hauled me out, bestowing a slap or two, and drove me like a dripping duck before her to the house.

"Let me catch you again, little good-for-nothing, at that moat!"

"I wanted to pick the water-iris," I pleaded.

"Oh yes, go there again to pick iris! Don't you know, then, little rascal, there is a snake hidden in the grass, a big snake who swallows whole, both birds and children."

She undressed me, taking off my small shoes,

socks, and shirt, and while my clothes dried put me on my Sunday sabots and suit, with the warning :

" Take care now to keep yourself clean."

Behold me again out of doors ; on the new straw I executed a happy caper, then catching sight of a white butterfly hovering over the stubble, off I went, my blonde curls flying in the wind and—all at once there I was again at the moat !

Oh, my beautiful yellow flowers ! They were still there, proudly rising out of the water, showing themselves off in a manner it was impossible to withstand. Very cautiously I descend the bank planting my feet squarely ; I thrust out my hand, I lean forward, stretching as far as I can . . . and splash . . . I am in the water again.

Woe is me ! While about me the bubbles gurgled and among the rushes I thought I spied the great snake, a loud voice cried out :

" Mistress, run quick, that child is in the water again."

My mother came running. She seized me and dragged me all black from the muddy bank, and the first thing I received was a resounding smack.

" You will go back to those flowers ? You will try to drown yourself ? A new suit ruined,

little rascal—little monster! nearly killing me with fright!"

Bedraggled and crying, I returned to the farm-house, head hanging. Again I was undressed, and this time arrayed in my festal suit. Oh, that fine suit! I can still see it with the bands of black velvet, and gold dots on a blue ground.

Surveying myself in my bravery, I asked my mother: "But what am I to do now?"

"Go take care of the chickens," she said; "don't let them stray—and you stay in the shade."

Full of zeal I ran off to the chickens, who were pecking about for ears of corn in the stubble. While at my post, curiously enough I perceive all at once a crested pullet giving chase to—what do you think? Why, a grasshopper, the kind with red and blue wings. Both, with me after them, for I wished to examine those wings, were soon dancing over the fields and, as luck would have it, we found ourselves before long at the draw-well moat.

And there were those golden flowers again mirrored in the water and exciting my desire; but a desire so passionate, delirious, excessive, as to make me entirely forget my two previous disasters.

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"This time," I said to myself, "I will certainly succeed."

So descending the bank I twisted around my hand a reed that grew there, and leaning over the water very prudently, tried once again to reach the iris blooms with the other hand. But misery! the reed broke and played me false—into the middle of the stream I plunged head foremost.

I righted myself as best I could and shrieked like a lost one. Every one came running.

"There's the little imp, in the water again! This time, you incorrigible youngster, your mother will give you the whipping you deserve."

But she did not. Down the pathway I saw her coming, the poor mother, and tears were in her eyes.

"O Lord," she cried, "but I won't whip him; he might have a fit—this boy is not like others. By all the saints he does nothing but run after flowers; he loses all his toys scrambling in the cornfields after nosegays. Now, as a climax, he has thrown himself three times within an hour into this moat! I can only clean him up, and thank heaven he is not drowned."

We mingled our tears together as we went home, then once indoors, saint that she was, my mother

again unclothed and dried me, and to ward off all evil consequences administered a dose of vermifuge before putting me to bed, where worn out with emotion I soon fell asleep.

Can any one guess of what I dreamt? Why, of my iris flowers! . . . In a lovely stream of water which wound all round the farm-house, a limpid, transparent, azure stream like the waters of the fountain at Vaucluse, I beheld the most beautiful clumps of iris covered with a perfect wonder of golden blossoms! Little dragon-flies with blue silk wings came and settled on the flowers, while I swam about naked in the laughing rivulet and plucked by handfuls and armfuls those enchanting yellow blooms. And the more I picked the more sprang up.

"All at once I heard a voice calling to me, "Frédéric!" I awoke, and to my joy I saw—a great bunch of golden iris all shining by my side.

The Master himself, my worshipful sire, had actually gone to pick those flowers I so longed for; and the Mistress, my dear sweet mother, had placed them on my bed.

CHAPTER II

MY FATHER

My early years were passed at the farm in the company of labourers, reapers and shepherds.

When occasionally a townsman visited our farm, one of those who affected to speak only French, it puzzled me sorely and even disconcerted me to see my parents all at once take on a respectful manner to the stranger, as though they felt him to be their superior. I was perplexed, too, at hearing another tongue.

"Why is it," I asked, "that man does not speak like we do?"

"Because he is a gentleman," I was told.

"Then I will never be a gentleman," I replied resentfully.

I remarked also that when we received visitors, such, for instance, as the Marquis de Barbentane, our neighbour, my father, who when speaking of my mother before the servants called her "the mistress," to the Marquis merely referred to her as "my wife." The grand Marquis and his lady, the Marquise, a sister of the great Général de

Gallifet, whenever they came used to bring me cakes and sweets, but in spite of this, no sooner did I see them driving up in their carriage than, like the young savage that I was, off I ran and hid in the hay-loft. In vain my poor mother would call "Frédéric." Crouching in the hay and holding my breath, I waited until I heard the departing carriage wheels of our guests, and my mother declaiming for the benefit of all: "It is insufferable; here are Monsieur de Barbentane and Madame de Barbentane, who come on purpose to see that child, and he goes off and hides himself!"

And when I crept out of my hiding-place, instead of the sweets, I received a good spanking.

What I really loved, however, was to go off with Papoty, our head-man, when he set out with the plough behind the two mules.

"Come on, youngster, and I'll teach you to plough," he would call enticingly.

Then and there off I would go, bareheaded and barefooted, briskly following in the furrow, and as I ran, picking the flowers, primroses and blue musk, turned up by the blade.

How joyous it was, this atmosphere of rustic life. Each season in turn brought its round of labour. Ploughing, sowing, shearing, reaping, the silk-worms, the harvests, the threshing, the vintage

and the olive gathering, unrolled before my eyes the majestic acts of the agricultural life, always a stern, hard life, yet always one of calm and freedom.

A numerous company of labourers came and went at the farm, weeders, haymakers, men hired by the day or the month, who with the goad, the rake, or the fork a-shoulder toiled with the free noble gestures of the peasants so well depicted in Léopold Robert's pictures.

At the dinner or supper hour, the men, one after the other, trooped into the farm-house, seating themselves according to their station around the big table. Then the master, my father, at the head, would question them gravely on the work of the day, the state of the flocks, of the ground or the weather. The repast ended, the chief carter shut to the blade of his big clasp-knife, the signal for all to rise.

In stature, in mind, as well as in character, my father towered above these country folk, a grand old patriarch, dignified in speech, just in his rule, beneficent to the poor, severe only to himself.

He loved to recall the early days when as a volunteer he served in the army during the revolution, and to recount tales of the war as we sat round the hearth in the evening.

Once during the Reign of Terror he had been requisitioned to carry corn to Paris, where famine was then raging. It was just after they had killed

the king, and France was paralysed with consternation and horror. One winter's day, returning across Bourgogne, with a cold sleet beating in his face and his cart-wheels half buried in the muddy road, he met a carrier of his own village. The two compatriots shook hands, and my father inquired whither the other was bound in this villainous weather :

" I am for Paris, citizen," replied the man, " taking there our church bells and altar saints."

" Accursed fellow," cried my father, trembling with wrath and indignation, and taking off his hat as he looked at the church relics. " I suppose you think on your return they will make you a Deputy for this devil's work ? "

The iconoclast skulked off with an oath and went on his way.

My father, I should observe, was profoundly religious. In the evening, summer and winter, it was his custom to gather round him the household, and kneeling on his chair, head uncovered and hands crossed, his white hair in a queue tied with a black ribbon, he would pray and read the gospels aloud to us.

My father read but three books in his life: the New Testament, the " Imitation," and " Don Quixote " ; the latter he loved because it recalled his campaign in Spain, and helped to pass the time

when a rainy season forced him indoors. In his youth schools were rare, and it was from a poor pedlar, who made his rounds of the farms once a week, that my father learnt his alphabet.

On Sunday after vespers, according to the old-time usage as head of the house, he did the weekly accounts, debit and credit with annotations, in a great volume called "Cartabèou."

Whatever the weather, he was always content. When he heard grumbling, either at tempestuous winds or torrential rains, "Good people," he would say, "the One above knows very well what He is about and also what we need. . . . Supposing these great winds which revivify our Provence and clear off the fogs and vapours of our marshes never blew? And if, equally, we were never visited by the heavy rains which supply the wells and springs and rivers? We need all sorts, my children."

Though he would not scorn to pick up a faggot on the road and carry it to the hearth, and though he was content with vegetables and brown bread for his daily fare, and was so abstemious always as to mix water with his wine, yet at his table the stranger never failed to find a welcome, and his hand and purse were ever open to the poor.

Faithful to the old customs, the great festival

of the year on our farm was Christmas Eve. That day the labourers knocked off work early, and my mother presented to each one, wrapped up in a cloth, a fine oil-cake, a stick of nougat, a bunch of dried figs, a cream cheese, a salad of celery, and a bottle of wine.

Then every man returned to his own village and home to burn the Yule log. Only some poor fellow who had no home would remain at the farm, and occasionally a poor relation, an old bachelor for example, would arrive at night saying :

" A merry Christmas, cousin. I have come to help you burn the Yule log."

Then, a merry company, we all sallied forth to fetch the log, which according to tradition must be cut from a fruit-tree. Walking in line we bore it home, headed by the oldest at one end, and I, the last born, bringing up the rear. Three times we made the tour of the kitchen, then, arrived at the flagstones of the hearth, my father solemnly poured over the log a glass of wine, with the dedicatory words :

" Joy, joy. May God shower joy upon us, my dear children. Christmas brings us all good things. God give us grace to see the New Year, and if we do not increase in numbers may we at all events not decrease."

In chorus, we responded:

"Joy, joy, joy!" and lifted the log on the fire-dogs. Then as the first flame leapt up my father would cross himself, saying, "Burn the log, O fire," and with that we all sat down to the table.

Oh, that happy table, blessed in the truest sense, peace and joy in every heart of the united family assembled round it. In the place of the ordinary lamp suspended from the ceiling, on this occasion we lit the three traditional candles, regarded by the company not without anxiety, lest the wick should turn towards any one—always a bad augury. At each end of the table sprouted some corn in a plate of water, set to germinate on St. Barbara's Day, and on the triple linen tablecloths* were placed the customary dishes, snails in their shells, fried slices of cod and grey mullet garnished with olives, cardoon, scholium, peppered celery, besides a variety of sweetmeats reserved for this feast, such as hearth-cakes, dried raisins, almond nougat, tomatoes, and then, most important of all, the big Christmas loaf, which is never partaken of until one-quarter has been bestowed on the first passing beggar.

During the long evening which followed before

* The three tablecloths are graduated in size, commencing with the largest, and are *de rigueur* for festal occasions.

starting out for the midnight Mass, gathered round the log fire we told tales of past days and recalled the grand old folks who were gone, and little by little my worthy father never failed to come back to his favourite Spanish wars and the famous siege of Figuières.

On New Year's Day, again, our home was the centre of hospitality, and we were greeted at early dawn by a crowd of our poorer neighbours, old people, women and children, who came round the farm-house singing their good wishes for the coming year. My father and mother, with kindly response, presented to each one a gift of two long loaves and two round ones. To all the poor of the village we also gave, in accordance with the tradition of our house, two batches of bread.

Every evening my father included this formula in his evening prayer :

> Did I live a hundred years
> A hundred years I would bake,
> And a hundred years give to the poor.

At his funeral the poor who mourned him said with fervour : " May he have as many angels to bear him to Paradise as he gave us loaves of bread."

This is a picture of the simple and noble patriarchal life of Provence in my youth.

CHAPTER III

THE MAGI KINGS

THE eve of the Feast of Epiphany it was the custom for all the children of our countryside to go forth to meet the three kings, the wise men from the East, who with their camels and attendants and all their suite came in procession to Maillane there to adore the Holy Child.

One such occasion I well remember.

With hearts beating in joyful excitement, eyes full of visions, we sallied forth on the road to Arles a numerous company of shock-headed urchins and blonde-headed maidens with little hoods and sabots, bearing our offerings of cakes for the kings, dried figs for their pages, and hay for the camels.

The east wind blew, which means it was cold. The sun sank, lurid, into the Rhône. The streams were frozen, and the grass at the water's edge dried up. The bark of the leafless trees showed ruddy tints, and the robin and wren hopped shivering from branch to branch. Not a soul was to be seen in the fields, save perhaps some poor

widow picking up sticks or a ragged beggar seeking snails beneath the dead hedges.

"Where go you so late, children?" inquired some passer-by.

"We go to meet the kings," we answered confidently.

And like young cocks, our heads in the air, along the white, wind-swept road we continued our way, singing and laughing, sliding and hopping.

The daylight waned. The bell-tower of Maillane disappeared behind the trees, the tall dark pointed cypresses and the wide barren plain stretched away into the dim distance. We strained our eyes as far as they could see, but in vain. Nothing was in sight save some branch broken by the wind laying on the stubbly field. Oh, the sadness of those mid-winter evenings when all nature seemed dumb and suffering.

Then we met a shepherd, his cloak wrapped tightly round him, returning from tending his sheep. He asked whither we were bound so late in the day. We inquired anxiously had he seen the kings, and were they still a long way off. Oh, the joy when he replied that he had passed the kings not so very long since—soon we should see them. Off we set running with all speed,

running to meet the kings and present our cakes and handfuls of hay.

Then, just as the sun disappeared behind a great dark cloud and the bravest among us began to flag—suddenly, behold them in sight.

A joyful shout rang from every throat as the magnificence of the royal pageant dazzled our sight.

A flash of splendour and gorgeous colour shone in the rays of the setting sun, while the blazing torches showed the gleams of gold on crowns set with rubies and precious stones.

The kings! The kings! See their crowns! See their mantles—their flags, and the procession of camels and horses which are coming.

We stood there entranced. But instead of approaching us little by little the glory and splendour of the vision seemed to melt away before our eyes with the sinking sun, extinguished in the shadows. Crestfallen we stood there, gaping to find ourselves alone on the darkening highway.

Which way did the kings go?

They passed behind the mountain.

The white owl hooted. Fear seized us, and huddling together we turned homewards, munching the cakes and figs we had brought for the kings.

Our mothers greeted us with, "Well, did you see them?"

Sadly we answered, "Only afar—they passed behind the mountain."

"But which road did you take?"

"The road to Arles."

"Oh, poor lambs—but the kings never come by that road. They come from the East—you should have taken the Roman road. Ah dear, what a pity, you should have seen them enter Maillane. It was a beautiful sight, with their tambours and trumpets, the pages and the camels —it was a show! Now they are gone to the church to offer their adoration. After supper you shall go and see them!"

We supped with speed, I at my grandmother's, and then we ran to the church. It was crowded, and, as we entered, the voices of all the people, accompanied by the organ, burst forth into the superbly majestic Christmas hymn:

> This morn I met the train
> Of the three great kings from the East;
> This morn I met the train
> Of the kings on the wide high road.

We children, fascinated, threaded our way between the women, till we reached the Chapel of the Nativity. There, suspended above the

altar, was the beautiful star, and bowing the knee in adoration before the Holy Child we beheld at last the three kings. Gaspard, with his crimson mantle, offering a casket of gold; Melchior, arrayed in yellow, bearing in his hands a gift of incense; and Balthazar, with his cloak of blue, presenting a vase of the sadly prophetic myrrh. How we admired the finely dressed pages who upheld the kings' flowing mantles, and the great humped camels whose heads rose high above the sacred ass and ox; also the Holy Virgin and Saint Joseph, besides all the wonderful background, a little mountain in painted paper with shepherds and shepherdesses bringing hearth-cakes, baskets of eggs, swaddling clothes, the miller with a sack of corn, the old woman spinning, the knife-grinder at his wheel, the astonished innkeeper at his window, in short, all the traditional crowd who figure in the Nativity, and, above and beyond all, the Moorish king.

Many a time since those early days it has chanced that I have found myself upon the road to Arles at this same Epiphany season about dusk. Still the robin and the wren haunt the long hawthorn hedge. Still some poor old beggar may be seen searching for snails in the ditch, and still the hoot of the owl breaks the stillness of the winter evening. But in the rays of the

setting sun I see no more the glory and crowns of the old kings.

Which way have they passed, the kings?

Behind the mountain.

Alas this melancholy and sadness clings always around the things seen with the eyes of our youth. However grand, however beautiful the landscape we have known in early days, when we return, eager to see it once more, something is ever lacking, something or some one!

"Oh, let me, dreaming, lose myself down yonder
Where widespread cornfields, red with poppies, lie,
As when a little lad, I used to wander
And lose myself, beneath the self-same sky.

Some one, searching every cover,
Seeks for me, the whole field over,
Saying her angelus piously;
But where yon the skylarks, singing,
Through the sun their way are winging,
I follow so fast and eagerly.
O poor mother! loving-hearted,
Dear, great soul! thou hast departed;
No more shall I hear thee, calling me."*
(From "Les Isclo d'Or." Trans. Alma Strettell).

Who can give me back the ideal joy and delight of my child-heart as I sat at my mother's knee drinking in the wonder-tales and fables, the old songs and rhymes, as she sang and spoke them in the soft sweet language of Provence.

* For Provençal text, *see* p. 324.

There was the "Pater des Calandes," Marie-Madeleine the poor fisher-girl, The Cabin-boy of Marseilles, the Swineherd, the Miser, and how many other tales and legends of Provence to which the cradle of my early years was rocked, filling my dreams with poetic visions. Thus from my mother I drew not only nourishment for my body but for my mind and soul, the sweet honey of noble tradition and faith in God.

In the present day, the narrow materialistic system refuses to reckon with the wings of childhood, the divine instincts of the budding imagination and its necessity to wonder, that faculty which formerly gave us our saints and heroes, poets and artists. The child of to-day no sooner opens his eyes than his elders try to wither up both heart and soul. Poor lunatics! Life and the day-school, above all the school of experience, will teach him but too soon the mean realities of life, and the disillusions, analectic and scientific, of all that so enchanted our youth.

If some tiresome anatomist told the young lover that the fair maiden of his heart, in the bloom of her youth and beauty, was but a grim skeleton when robbed of her outer covering, would he not be justified in shooting him out of hand?

In connection with those traditions and wonder-tales of Provence, familiar to my childhood, I cannot do better than quote old Dame Renaude, a gossip of our village when I was a boy.

Still I can picture her seated on a log and sunning herself at her door. She is withered, shrivelled and lined, the poor old soul, like a dried fig. Brushing away the teasing flies, she drinks in the sunshine, dozes and sleeps the hours away.

"Taking a little nap in the sun, Tante Renaude?"

"Well, see you, I was neither exactly waking nor sleeping—I said my paternosters and I dreamt a bit—and praying, you know, one is apt to doze. Aye, but it is a bad thing when one is past work—the time hangs heavy on hand."

"Won't you catch cold sitting out of doors?"

"Me, catch cold? Why I am dry as match-wood. If I was boiled I shouldn't furnish a drop of oil."

"If I were you I would stroll round quietly and have a chat with some old crony—it would help pass the time."

"The old gossips of my time are nearly all gone, soon there won't be one left. True, there is still the old Geneviève, deaf as a plough, and old Patantane in her dotage, and Catherine de Four

who does nothing but groan—I've enough of my own ailments. Oh no, it is better to be alone."

"Why not go and have a chat with the washer-women down there at the wash-house?"

"What, those hussies? who backbite and pull each other to pieces, first one and then the other, the livelong day. They abuse every one and then laugh like idiots. The good God will send a judgment on them one of these days. Aye, but it was not so in our time."

"What did you talk about in your time?"

"In our time? Why, we told old histories and tales which it was a pleasure to listen to, such as 'The Beast with Seven Heads,' 'Fearless John,' and 'The Great Body without a Soul.' Why one of those tales would last us three or four evenings. At that time we spun our own wool and hemp. Winter time after supper we used to take our distaffs and meet together in some big sheep-barn, and while the men fed and folded the beasts and outside the north wind blew and the dogs howled at the prowling wolves, we women huddled together with the young lambs and their mothers, and as our spinning-wheels hummed busily, told each other tales.

"We believed in those days in things which they laugh at now, but which all the same were seen

by people I myself know, people whose word was to be trusted. There was my Aunt Mïan, wife of the basket-maker whose grandsons live at the Clos de Pain-Perdu; one day when she was picking up sticks, she saw all at once a fine white hen. It seemed quite tame, but when my Aunt put out her hand gently the hen eluded her, and commenced pecking in the grass a little way off. Very cautiously again Aunt Mïan approached the hen, who seemed to desire to be caught. But directly my aunt thought she had got her, off she was—the aunt following, more and more determined to catch her. More than an hour she led her a dance, then as the sun went down Mïan took fright and turned home. Lucky for her she did, for had she gone after that white hen all night, the Holy Virgin only knows where the creature would have landed the poor woman!

"Folks told, too, of a black horse or mule, some said it was a huge sow, which appeared to the young rakes as they came out of the public-house. One night at Avignon a lot of good-for-nothings on the spree saw a black horse suddenly come out of the Camband Sewer.

"'Oh, look!' says one of them, 'here's a fine horse, blest if I don't mount him,' and the horse let him get on quietly enough.

"'Why there's room for me, too,' says another, and up he got.

"'And me, too,' says a third. He jumped up also, and as one by one they mounted, that horse's back became longer and longer, till, if you'll believe it, there were a dozen of those young fools on this same horse! Then a thirteenth cries out:

"'Lord—Holy Virgin and sainted Joseph, I believe there's room for another'! But at these words the beast vanished, and our twelve riders found themselves on their feet looking sheepish enough, I can tell you. Lucky for them that the last one had pronounced the names of the saints, for otherwise that evil beast would have carried them straight to the devil.

"And then, O Lord, there were the witch-cats. Why yes, those black cats they called the 'Mascots,' for they were said to make money come to the house where they lived. You knew the old Tarlavelle, eh?—she who left such a pile of crowns when she died—well, she had a black cat, and she took care to give it the first helping at every meal. And there was my poor uncle, going to bed one night by the light of the moon, what does he see but a black cat crossing the road. He, thinking no harm, threw a stone at the cat—when, lo and behold, the beast turned round, gave him an

evil look, and hissed out, 'Thou hast hit Robert!' Strange things! To-day they seem like dreams, nobody ever mentions them—yet there must have been something in it all, or why should every one have been so afraid. Eh, and there were many others," continued Renaude, "awful strange creatures like the Night-witch, who seated herself on your chest and squeezed the breath out of you. And the Wier-wolf, and the Jack o' Lantern, and the Fantastic Sprite. Why, just fancy, one day—I might have been eleven years old—I was returning from the catechism class when, passing near a poplar, I heard a laugh coming from the very top of the tree. I looked up, and there was the Fantastic Sprite grinning between the leaves and making me signs to climb up. Why, I wouldn't have gone up that tree for a hundred onions—I took to my heels and ran as if I'd gone crazy. Oh, I can tell you, when we talked of these things round the hearth at nights not one of us would have gone outside. Poor children, what a fright we were in. But we soon grew up, and then came the time for lovers, and the lads would call to us to come out and walk or dance by the moonlight. At first we refused for fear we might meet the White Hen or the Fantastic Sprite, but when they called us 'sillies' to believe such blind

grandmother's tales, and said they'd scare away the hobgoblins—boys of that age have got no sense, and make you laugh with their nonsense even against your will—why, gradually we ceased to think so much of it. For one thing we soon had too much to do. Why, I had eleven children, who all turned out well, thank God, besides others I looked after. When one is not rich and has all those brats to do for, one's hands are pretty full, I can tell you."

"Well, Tante Renaude, may the good God protect you."

"Oh, now I am well ripened—let Him pluck me as soon as He will." And with her big handkerchief the old body flicks at the flies, and nodding her head, quietly leans back and continues to drink in the sunshine.

CHAPTER IV

NATURE'S SCHOOL

At eight years old I was sent to school with a little blue satchel to carry my books and my lunch. Not before, thank God, for in all that touched my inner development and the education and temperament of my young poet's soul, I certainly learnt far more through the games and frolics of my country childhood than by the tiresome repetition of the school routine.

In our time, the dream of all youngsters who went to school was to play truant, once at least, in a thoroughly successful manner. To have accomplished this was to be regarded by the others as on a par with brigands, pirates, and other heroes.

In Provence it is the custom for such an exploit to be carried out by running away to a far and unknown country, being careful to confide the project to no one. The time chosen by the young Provençal for this adventure is when he has, by some fault, or the sad error of disobedience, good cause to fear that on his return home he will be welcomed rather too warmly !

When, therefore, this fate looms over some unlucky fellow, he just gives school and parents the slip, and defying consequences, off he goes on his travels with a "Long live liberty!"

Oh, the delight, the joy, at that age to feel complete master of oneself, and the bridle hanging loose, to roam where fancy beckons, away into the blue distance, down into the swamp, or may be up to the mountain heights!

But—after a while comes hunger. Playing truant in the summer time, that evil is not so serious. There are fields of broad beans, fair orchards with their crops of apples, pears, and peaches, cherry-trees delighting the eye, fig-trees offering their ripe fruit, and bulging melons that cry out "Eat me." And then those lovely vines, the stock of the golden grape. Ah!—I fancy I can see them yet!

Of course if the game was played in winter, things were not quite so smiling. Some young scamps would boldly visit farms where they were unknown and ask for food, and some again, more unscrupulous rascals, would steal the eggs and even take the stale nest-egg, drinking and gulping it down with relish. Others, however, were of prouder stuff; they had not run away from home and school for any misdemeanour, but either

from pure thirst of independence or because of some injustice which, having deeply wounded the heart, made the victim flee man and his habitation. These would pass the nights sleeping amidst the corn, in the fields of millet, sometimes under a bridge or in some shed or straw-stack. When hungry they gathered from the hedges and the fields mulberries, sloes, almonds left on the trees, or little bunches of grapes from the wild vine. They did not even object to the fruit of the wych-elm, which they called white bread, nor unearthed onions, choke-pears, beech-nuts, nor at a pinch to acorns. For to all these truants each day was a glorious game, and every step a bound of delight. What need of companions when all the beasts and insects were your playfellows? You could understand what they were after, what they said, what they thought, and they appeared to understand you quite as well.

You caught a grasshopper and examined her little shining wings. Very gently you stroked her with your hand to make her sing, then sent her away with a straw in her mouth. Or, resting full length on a bank, you find a lady-bird climbing up your finger, and at once you sing to her:

"Lady-bird, fly,
Be off to the school," &c.

and as the lady-bird stretches her wings she replies :

"Go home yourself—I am quite happy where I am."

Then a praying-mantis kneels before you and you ask :

"Praying-mantis, art so wise,
Know you where the sly fox lies ?"

The mantis raises a long thin arm and points to the mountains.

A lizard sits warming himself in the sun and you address him with the correct formula :

"Little lizard, be my friend
'Gainst all snakes that bite and bend,
Then I'll give you grains of salt
When before my house you halt."

"Your house ! And when will you be back there ?" the lizard says as plainly as you could yourself, and, with a whisk, disappears in his hole.

Should you meet a snail, you greet him in this fashion :

"Oh, snail with one eye,
Your horns let me spy,
Or the blacksmith I'll call
To smash house and all."

It was home, always home, to which every one harked back ; till at last, after having destroyed

sufficient nests—and made sufficient holes in nether garments—being weary of pipes made from barley-straws and of whistles made of willow twigs, besides having set one's teeth on edge with green apples and other sour fruit, suddenly the truant is seized with home-sickness, a great longing at the heart turns the feet homewards and lowers the once proud head.

Being of true Provençal stock, I also must needs make my escapade before I had been three months at school. It happened thus.

Three or four young rascals, who, under pretext of cutting grass or collecting wood, idled away the livelong day, came to meet me one morning as I set out for school at Maillane.

"You little simpleton, what do you want to go to school for?" said they. "Boxed in all day between four walls, punished for this or that, your fingers rapped with a ruler! Bah! come and play with us——!"

Ah me! how crystal clear the water ran in the brook; how the larks sang up there in the blue; the cornflowers, the iris, the poppies, the rose-campions, how fair they bloomed in the sunshine which played on the green meadows. So I said to myself:

"School! Well, that can wait till to-morrow."

And then, with trousers turned up, off we went to the water. We paddled, we splashed, we fished for tadpoles, we made mud pies, and then smeared our bare little legs with black slime to make ourselves boots! Afterwards, in the dust of some hollow by the wayside, we played at soldiers:

Rataplan, Rataplan,
I'm a military man, &c.

What fun it was! no king's children were our equals. And then with the bread and provisions in my satchel, we had a fine picnic on the grass.

But all such joys must end. The schoolmaster informed against me, and behold me arraigned before my sire's judgment-seat:

"Now hear me, Frédéric, the next time you miss school to go off paddling in the brook, I will break a stick over your back—do not forget."

In spite of this, three days after, through sheer thoughtlessness, I again cut school and went off to the brook.

Did he spy on me, or was it mere chance that brought him that way? Just as I and my boon companions were splashing about with naked legs, at a few paces from us suddenly I behold my sire. My heart gave one bound.

He stood still and called to me:

"So that is it! . . . You know what I promised you? Very well, I shall be ready for you this evening."

Nothing more, and he went on his way.

My good father, good as the Blessed Bread, had never given me even a slap, but he had a loud voice and a rough way of speaking, and I feared him as I did fire.

"Ha!" I said to myself, "this time, but *this* time, he will kill you. Assuredly he has gone to prepare the rod."

My companions, little scamps, snapped their fingers with glee, and cried:

"Aha! aha! what a drubbing you'll get! Aha! aha! on your bare back too!"

"All is up," I said to myself. "I must be off—I must run away."

So I went. As well as I remember I took a road that led right up to the Crau d'Eyragues. But at that time, poor little wretch, I hardly knew where I was going, and after walking for an hour or so, it seemed to me that I had gone far enough to have arrived in America.

The sun began to go down. I was tired, and frightened too. "It is getting late," I thought, "and where shall I find my supper? I must go and beg at some farm."

So, turning out of the road, I discreetly approached a little white farm-house. It had almost a welcoming air, with its pig-sties, manure-heap, well, and vine arbour, all protected from the east wind by a cypress hedge.

Very timidly I approached the doorstep, and, looking in, saw an old body stirring some soup. She was dirty and dishevelled; to eat what she cooked one required indeed the sauce of hunger. Unhooking the pot from the chain on which it swung, the old woman placed it on the kitchen floor, and with a long spoon she poured the soup over some slices of bread.

"I see, granny, you are making some soup," I remarked pleasantly.

"Yes," she answered curtly; "and where do you come from, young one?"

"I come from Maillane. I have run away, and—I should be much obliged if you would give me something to eat."

"Oh, indeed," replied the ugly old dame in growling tones. "Then just sit you down on the doorstep and not on my chairs!"

I obeyed by winding myself up into a ball on the lowest step.

"If you please, what is this place called?" I asked meekly.

" Papeligosse."

" Papeligosse ? " I repeated in dismay.

For in Provence when they wish, in joke, to convey to children the idea of a far distant land, they call it Papeligosse. At that age I believed in Papeligosse, in Zibe-Zoube, in Gafe-l'Ase, and other visionary regions as firmly as in my Paternoster. So when the old woman uttered that magic word, a cold shiver went down my back, realising myself so far from home.

" Ah yes," she continued as she finished her cooking, " and you must know that in this country the lazy ones get nothing to eat—so if you want any soup, my boy, you must work for it."

" Oh, I will—what shall I do ? " I inquired eagerly.

" This is what we will do, you and I, both of us. We will stand at the foot of the stairs and have a jumping match. The one who jumps farthest shall have a good bowl of soup—the other shall eat with his eyes only—understand, eh ? "

I agreed readily, not only proud that I should earn my supper and amuse myself into the bargain, but also feeling no doubts as to the result of the match ; it was a pity indeed if I could not jump farther than a rickety old body.

So, feet together, we placed ourselves at the

foot of the staircase, which in all farm-houses stands opposite the front door, close to the threshold.

"Now," cried the old woman, "one," and she swung her arms as though to get a good start.

"Two—three," I added, and then sprang with all my might, triumphantly clearing the threshold. But that cunning old body had only pretended to spring; quick as light she shut the door, and drawing the bolt cried out to me:

"Little rascal—go back to your parents—they will be getting anxious—come, off with you!"

There I stood, unlucky urchin, feeling like a basket with the bottom knocked out. What was I to do? Go home? Not for a kingdom. I could picture my father ready to receive me, the menacing rod in his hand. To add to my trouble, it was getting dark, and I no longer knew the road by which I had come. I resolved to trust in God.

Behind the farm, a path led up the hill between two high banks. I started off, regardless of risks. "Onward, Frédéric," said I.

After clambering up the steep path, then down and up again, I felt tired out. It was hardly surprising at eight years old, and with an empty stomach since midday. At last I came on a

broken-down cottage in a neglected vineyard. They must have set it on fire at one time, for the cracked walls were black with smoke. There were no doors or windows, and the beams only held up half the roof, which had fallen in on one side. It might have been the abode of a nightmare!

But—"needs must" as they say when there is no choice. So, worn out, and half dead with sleep, I climbed on to one of the beams, laid down, and in a twinkling fell sound asleep.

I don't know how long I lay there, but in the middle of a leaden slumber I became aware of three men sitting round a charcoal fire, laughing and talking.

"Am I dreaming?" I asked myself in my sleep. "Am I dreaming, or is this real?"

But the heavy sense of well-being, into which drowsiness plunges one, prevented any feeling of fear, and I continued to sleep placidly.

I suppose that at last the smoke began to suffocate me, and on a sudden I started up with a cry of fright. Since I did not die then and there of sheer horror, I am convinced I shall never die.

Imagine three wild gypsy faces, all turned on you at the same moment—and with oh, such eyes! such awful eyes!

"Don't kill me! don't kill me!" I shrieked.

The gypsies, who had been almost as startled as I, burst out laughing, and one of them said:

"You young scamp, you can boast that you gave us a nice scare!"

When I found they could laugh and talk like myself, I took courage, and noticed at the same time what a good smell came from their pot.

They made me get down from my perch and demanded where I came from, to whom I belonged, why I was there, and a string of other questions.

Satisfied at length of my identity, one of the robbers—for they were robbers—said to me:

"Since you are playing truant, I suppose you are hungry. Here, eat this."

And he threw me a shoulder of lamb, half cooked, as though I were a dog. I then noticed they had just been roasting a young lamb, stolen probably from some fold.

After we had, in this primitive fashion, all made a good meal, the three men rose, collected their traps and in low tones took counsel together; then one of them turned to me:

"Look here, youngster, since you are a bit of a brick we don't want to harm you, but all the same, we can't have you spying which way we go, so we are going to pop you into that barrel there.

When the day comes you can call out and the first passer-by can release you—if he likes!"

"All right," I said submissively. "Put me into the barrel." To tell the truth I was very glad to get off so cheaply.

In the corner of the hovel stood a battered cask, used, doubtless, at the time of the vintage for fermenting the grape.

They caught hold of me by the seat of my trousers, and pop! into the cask I went. So there I found myself, in the middle of the night, in a cask, on the floor of a cottage in ruins.

I crouched down, poor little wretch, rolling myself up like a ball, and while waiting for the dawn I said my prayers in low tones to scare the evil spirits.

But—imagine my dismay when suddenly I heard, in the dark, something prowling and snorting, round my cask! I held my breath as though I were dead, and committed myself to God and the sainted Virgin. Still I heard it, that dread something going round and round me, sniffing and pushing—what the devil was it? My heart thumped and knocked like a hammer.

But to finish my tale: at last the day commenced to dawn, and the pattering that caused

me such fear seemed to me to be growing a little more distant. Very cautiously I peeped out by means of the bunghole, and there, not far off, I beheld—a wolf, my good friends—nothing short of a wolf the size of a donkey! An enormous wolf with eyes that glared like two lamps.

Attracted by the odour of the cooked lamb he had come there, and finding nothing but bones, the close proximity of a Christian child's tender flesh filled him with hungry longing. But the curious thing was that, far from feeling fear at the sight of this beast, I experienced a great relief. The fact was, I had so dreaded some nocturnal apparition that the sight of even such a wolf gave me courage.

"All very fine," I thought, "but I've not done with him yet. If that beast finds out that the cask is open at the top, he will jump in also and crunch me up with one bite of those teeth. I must think of a plan to outwit him!"

Some movement I made caught the sharp ear of the wolf, and with one bound he was back at the cask, prowling round and lashing the sides with his long tail. Promptly I passed my small hand through the bunghole, seized hold of that tail, and pulling it inside, grasped it tightly with both hands. The wolf, as though he had five

hundred devils after him, started off, dragging the cask over rocks and stones, through fields and vineyards. We must have rolled together over all the ups and downs of Eyragues, of Lagoy, and of Bourbourel.

"Oh mercy! pity! dear Virgin, dear Saint Joseph," I cried out. "Where is this wolf taking me? And if the cask breaks he will gobble me up in a moment."

Then all of a sudden, crash went the cask—the tail escaped from my hands, and—far off, quite in the distance, I saw my wolf escaping at a gallop. On looking round, what was my astonishment to find myself close to the New Bridge, on the road that leads to Maillane from Saint-Rémy, not more than a quarter of an hour from our farm. The barrel must have knocked up against the parapet of the bridge and come to pieces in that way.

It is hardly necessary to say that after such adventures the thought of the rod in my father's hand no longer possessed any terrors for me, and running as though the wolf were after me I soon found myself at home.

At the back of the farm-house I saw in the field my father ploughing a long furrow. He leant against the handle and called to me laughing:

"Ha, ha, my fine fellow, run in quick to your mother—she has not slept a wink all night!"

And I ran in to my mother.

Omitting nothing, I related to my parents all my thrilling adventures, but when I came to the story of the robbers and the cask and the enormous wolf:

"Ah, little simpleton," they cried, "why it was fright made you dream all that!"

It was useless my assuring them again and again that it was true as the Gospel; I could never get any one to believe me.

Mistral in 1864.

CHAPTER V

AT ST. MICHEL DE FRIGOLET

When my parents found that my whole heart was set upon play and that nothing could keep me from idling away the livelong day in the fields with the village boys, they came to the stern resolve to send me away to a boarding-school.

So one morning a small folding-bed, a deal box to hold my papers, together with a bristly pig-skin trunk containing my books and belongings, were placed in the farm cart, and I departed with a heavy heart, accompanied by my mother to console me, and followed by our big dog "Le Juif," for St. Michel de Frigolet.

It was an old monastery, situated in the Montagnette, about two hours' distance from the farm, between Graveson, Tarascon, and Barbentane. At the Revolution the property of Saint-Michel had been sold for a little paper money, and the deserted monastery, spoiled of its goods, uninhabited and solitary, remained desolate up there in the midst of the wilds, open to the four winds and to the wild beasts. Occasionally smugglers

used it as a powder factory ; shepherds as a shelter for their sheep in the rain ; or gamblers from neighbouring towns—Graveson, Maillane, Barbentane, Château-Renard—resorted there to hide and to escape the police. And there, by the light of a few pale candles, while gold pieces clinked to the shuffling of cards, oaths and blasphemies echoed under the arches where so recently psalms had been raised. Their game finished, the libertines then ate, drank and made merry until dawn.

About the year 1832 some mendicant friars established themselves there. They replaced the bell in the old Roman tower, and on Sunday they set it ringing.

But they rang in vain, no one mounted the hill for the services, for no one had faith in them. And the Duchesse De Berry, having just at this time come to Provence to incite the Carlists against the King, Louis-Philippe, I remember that it was whispered that these fugitive brothers, under their black gabardines, were in reality nothing but soldiers (or bandits) plotting for some doubtful intrigue.

It was after the departure of these brothers that a worthy native of Cavaillon, by name Monsieur Donnat, bought the Convent of Saint-Michel on credit and started there a school for boys.

He was an old bachelor, yellow and swarthy in face, with lank hair, flat nose, a large mouth, and big teeth. He wore a long black frock-coat and bronzed shoes. Very devout he was and as poor as a church mouse, but he devised a means for starting his school and collecting pupils without a penny in his purse.

For example, he would go to Graveson, Tarascon, Barbentane, or Saint-Pierre looking up the farmer who had sons.

"I wish to tell you," he would begin, "that I have opened a school at St. Michel de Frigolet. You have now, at your door, an excellent institution for instructing your boys and helping them to pass their examinations."

"That is all very fine for rich people, sir," the father of the family would answer, "but we are poor folk, and can't afford all that education for our boys. They can always learn enough at home to work on the land."

"Look here," says Monsieur Donnat, "there is nothing better than a good education. You need not worry about payment. You will give me every year so many loads of wheat and so many barrels of wine or casks of oil—in that way we will arrange matters."

The good farmer gladly agreed his boy should

go to St. Michel de Frigolet. Monsieur Donnat then went on to a shopkeeper and began in this wise:

"A fine little boy that is of yours!—and he looks wide awake too! Now you don't want to make a pounder of pepper of him, do you?"

"Ah, sir, if we could we would give him a little education, but colleges are so expensive, and when one isn't rich——"

"Are you on the look-out for a college?" exclaimed Monsieur Donnat. "Why, send him to my school, up there at Saint-Michel, we will teach him a little Latin and make a man of him! And —as to payment, we will take toll of the shop. You will have in me another customer, and a good customer, I can tell you!"

And without further question the shopkeeper confided his son to Monsieur Donnat.

In this way Monsieur Donnat gathered into his school some forty small boys of the neighbourhood, myself among them. Out of the number, some parents, like my own, paid in money, but quite three-fourths paid in kind—provisions, goods, or their labour. In one word, Monsieur Donnat, before the Republic, social and democratic, had easily, and without any hubbub, solved the problem of the Bank of Exchange, a measure which the famous Proudhon in 1848 preached in vain.

One of the scholars I remember well. I think he was from Nîmes, and we called him Agnel; he was rather like a girl, gentle and pretty, with something sad in his look. Our parents came often to see us and brought us cakes and other good things. But Agnel appeared to have no relations, no one came to see him and he never spoke of those belonging to him. Only on one occasion had a tall strange gentleman of haughty and mysterious aspect appeared at the convent and inquired for Agnel. The interview, which was private, had lasted for about half an hour, after which the tall gentleman had departed and never reappeared. This gave rise to the conjecture that Agnel was a child of superior though illegitimate birth, being brought up in hiding at Saint-Michel. I lost sight of him completely on leaving.

Our instructors consisted, to begin with, of our master, the worthy Monsieur Donnat, who, when at home, took the lower classes, but half the time he was away gleaning pupils. Then there were two or three poor devils, old seminarists, who, having thrown cap and gown to the winds, were well content to earn a few crowns, besides being well housed, fed and washed; we boasted also a priestling, Monsieur Talon by name, who said Mass for us; and, finally, a little hunchback,

Monsieur Lavagne, the professor of music. For our cook we had a negro, and to wait at table and do the washing a woman of Tarascon, some thirty years old. To complete this happy family there were the worthy parents of Monsieur Donnat—the father, poor old chap, coifed in a red cap, and assisted by the donkey, was employed to fetch the provisions ; and the old white-capped dame acted as barber to us, when necessary.

In those days Saint-Michel was of much less importance than it has since become. There existed merely the cloisters of the old Augustine monks with the little green in the middle, while to the south in a small group rose the refectory, chapter-house, kitchen, stables, and lastly, the dilapidated Church of Saint-Michel. The walls of the latter were covered with frescoes representing a flaming fiery hell of damned souls, and demons armed with pitch-forks, taking active part in the deadly combat between the devil and the great archangel.

Outside this cluster of buildings stood a small buttressed chapel dedicated to Our Lady of Succour, with a porch at the side. Great tufts of ivy covered the walls, and inside it was decorated with rich gildings enclosing pictures, attributed to Mignard, representing the Life of the Virgin.

Queen Anne of Austria, mother of Louis XIV., had so adorned the chapel, in accordance with a vow made to the Virgin should she become the mother of a son.

During the Revolution, this chapel, a real gem hidden among the mountains, had been saved by the good country people, who piled up faggots in front of the porch, so hiding the entrance. Here it was that every morning, at five o'clock in summer and six in winter, we were taken to hear Mass, and here it was that with faith, a real angelic faith, I prayed—we all prayed. Here also, on Sundays, we sang Mass and vespers, each one prayer-book in hand; and here, on the great feast-days, the country people came to admire the voice of the little Frédéric; for I had, at that age, a pretty clear voice like a girl's. At the Elevation, when we sang motets, it was I who had the solos, and I well remember one in which I specially distinguished myself commencing with these words:

O mystery incomprehensible,
Great God Thou art not loved.

In front of the little chapel grew some nettle-trees, the sweet blossoms of which, hanging in tempting clusters, often lured us to climb the branches, to the destruction of our garments.

There was also a well, bored and cut in the rock, which, by a subterranean outlet, poured its waters down into a basin, and, descending further, watered the kitchen garden. Below the garden, at the entrance of the valley, grew a clump of white poplars, brightening up the rather barren landscape.

For Saint-Michel was a wild solitary spot, the old monastery being built on a plateau in a narrow passage between the mountains, far from the haunts of men, as the inscription over the entrance truly testified :

> " I fled from the cities, where injustice and vanity reign unchecked, and sought for solitude. This is the place I have chosen for my habitation. Here shall I find rest."

The spurs of the mountains around were covered with thyme, rosemary, asphodel, box and lavender. In some protected corners grew vines, which produced, strange to say, a vintage of some renown —the famous wine of Frigolet. A few olive-trees were planted on the spur of the hills, and here and there in the broken stony ground, rows of almond-trees, tortuous, rugged and stunted. In the clefts of the rocks might be seen occasional wild fig-trees. This was all the vegetation these rocky hills could show, the rest was only waste

land and crushed boulders. But how good it smelt, this odour of the mountains, how intoxicating as we drank it in at sunrise!

The generality of schoolboys are penned up in big cold courtyards between four walls, but we had the mountains for our playground. On Thursdays, and every day at recreation hours, no sooner were we let out than we were off like partridges, over valley and mountain, until the convent bell rang out the recall. No danger of our suffering from dulness. In the glorious summer sunshine the ortolan sang afar his "Tsi tsi béau"; and we rolled in the sweet thyme or roamed in search of forgotten almonds and green grapes left on the vines. We gathered mushrooms, set traps for the birds, searched the ravines for those fossils called in all that countryside "Saint Stephen's stones," hunted in the grottos for the Golden Goat, and climbed and tumbled about till our parents found it hardly possible to keep us decently clothed or shod.

Ragged and tattered as a troop of young gypsies, how we revelled in that wonderful country of mountains, gorges, and ravines, with their superb Provençal names, so sonorous and characteristic, they seem to bear the impress of the genius of the people. The "Mourre de la

Nur," from whose summit one could see the white coast-line of the Mediterranean, and where at sunset on Saint John's day we lit the bonfires; the Baume de l'Argent, where formerly they made counterfeit coin; the Roque Pied de Bœuf, on which was the mark of a bull's hoof; and the Roque d'Acier, dominating the Rhône, with its boats and rafts as they float down the stream: national monuments these, of our land and our language, sweet with the scent of thyme, rosemary and lavender, glowing with colours of gold and azure. O Land where Nature smiles so divinely, what dreams of delight thou didst reveal to my childhood!

But to return to Saint-Michel. We had, as I have said, a certain chaplain, Monsieur Talon, a little abbé from Avignon. He was short, stout, with a rubicund visage like a beggar's water-gourd. The Archbishop of Avignon had deprived him of his benefice because he was somewhat given to tippling, and sent him to us to be out of the way.

One Saint's day—a Thursday—we had all been taken over to a neighbouring village, Boulbon, to march in the procession—the big boys swung incense, the little ones scattered flowers, while Monsieur Talon was invited, most imprudently alas! to be the officiating priest.

All the town turned out; men, women, and girls lined the streets, gaily decorated with flags and bunting. The confraternities waved their banners, the fresh voices of the white-robed choristers intoned the Canticles, and with devout heads bowed before the Host; we swung our censers and strewed our flowers, when all at once a murmur ran through the crowd, and, great heavens! down the centre of the street with the Host in his hands, the golden cope on his back, came poor Monsieur Talon swaying like a pendulum.

He had dined at the presbytery, and had no doubt been pressed to too much of that good vintage of Frigolet, which mounts so quickly to the head. The unhappy man, red as much from shame as from the wine, could not hold himself straight. Supported by the deacon and sub-deacon, one on each side, he entered the church with the procession. But finding himself before the altar, Monsieur Talon could say nothing save, "Oremus, oremus, oremus," and finally they were obliged to remove him to the sacristy.

The scandal this caused may be imagined! Less, however, in that particular district than elsewhere, for all this took place in a parish where the "divine bottle" still celebrates its rites, as

in the days of Bacchus. Near Boulbon, in the mountains, stands an old chapel dedicated to Saint-Marcellin, and on the first day of June the men of Boulbon go there in procession, each carrying a bottle of wine.

Women are not allowed to take part in this ceremony for, according to the Roman tradition, our women formerly drank nothing but water, and to reconcile the young girls to this ancient *régime* they were told, and are still told, that water is good for the complexion.

The Abbé Talon never failed to escort us every year to the Procession of Bottles. Having taken our places in the chapel, the Curé of Boulbon, turning to the congregation, would say :

" My brethren—uncork your bottles, and let there be silence for the benediction."

Then, having donned a red cope, he solemnly chanted the prescribed formula for the benediction of the wine, and after saying " Amen," we all made the sign of the cross and took a pull at our bottles. The curé and the mayor, after clinking glasses religiously on the steps of the altar, also drank. On the morrow, when the fête was over, if there happened to be a drought at the time, the bust of Saint-Marcellin was borne in a procession through all the country-side, for the Boulbonnais

declare that good Saint-Marcellin blesses both wine and water.

Another pilgrimage, also of a festive nature, and now quite gone out of fashion, was that of Saint-Anthime. It took place at Montagnette, and was got up by the people of Graveson, when there happened to be a scarcity of rain.

Intoning their litanies and followed by a crowd of people, their heads covered with sacks, the priests would carry Saint-Anthime, a highly coloured bust with prominent eyes, beard, and mitre, to the Church of Saint-Michel, and there the whole blessed day, the provisions spread out on the fragrant grass, they would await the rain, and devoutly drink the wine of Frigolet. And I can stake my word that, more than once, the return journey was made in a flood of rain ; this may have been owing to the hymns, for our forefathers had a saying that, " Singing brings the rain."

If, however, Saint-Anthime, in spite of litanies and pious libations, did not manage to collect the clouds, then the jolly penitents, on their return to Graveson, would punish him for his lack of power by plunging him three times in the brook of Lones. This curious custom of dipping the images of saints in water, to compel them to send rain, prevailed

in many districts, at Toulouse, for instance, and I have heard of it even in Portugal.

Our mothers never failed to take us in our childhood to the church at Graveson, there to show us Saint-Anthime and also Béluget, a Jack-of-the-Clock, who struck the hours in the belfry.

In concluding my experiences at Saint-Michel, I recollect, in a dreamlike fashion, that towards the end of my first year, just before the holidays, we played a comedy called *The Children of Edward*, by Casimir Delavigne. To me was allotted the part of a young princess, and my mother supplied me for the occasion with a muslin dress which she borrowed from a little girl of our neighbourhood. This white dress was, later, the cause of a pretty little romance, which I will tell further on.

In the second year of my schooling, having begun to learn Latin, I wrote to my parents to send me some books, and a few days after, looking down into the valley, behold I saw mounting the path to the convent, my father astride on Babache, the good old mule of thirty years' service, well known at all the market towns around. For my father always rode Babache, whether to the market, or going the round of his fields with the long weeding-fork, which he used from his saddle, cutting down the thistles and weeds.

Upon reaching the convent, my father emptied an enormous sack which he had brought with him on his saddle.

"See, Frédéric," he called, "I have brought thee a few books and some paper!"

Therewith he pulled from the sack, one after the other, four or five dictionaries bound in parchment, a mass of paper books—"Epitome," "De Viris Illustribus," "Selecta Historiæ," "Conciones," &c.—a huge bottle of ink, a bundle of goose quills, and enough writing paper to last me seven years, to the end of my school time in fact. It was from Monsieur Aubanel, printer at Avignon, and father of the future famous and beloved Félibre, at that time unknown to me, that my worthy parent had with such promptness made this provision for my education.

At our pleasant monastery of St. Michel de Frigolet, however, I had no leisure to use much writing material. Monsieur Donnat, our master, for one reason or another, was seldom at his own establishment, and, as the proverb truly says, "When the cat is away, the mice will play." The masters, badly paid, had always some excuse for cutting short the lesson, and when the parents visited the school, there was often no one to be seen. On their inquiring for the boys, some of

us would be found actively engaged in repairing the stone wall which upheld a slanting field, while others would be among the vines revelling in the discovery of forgotten little bunches of grapes or mushrooms. Unfortunately, these circumstances did not conduce to much confidence in our headmaster. Another thing which contributed to the decline of the school was that, in order to increase the numbers, poor Monsieur Donnat took pupils who paid little or nothing, and these were not the boys who ate least.

The end came at last in a characteristic manner. We had, as I have said, a negro as cook, and one fine day this individual, without warning, packed his box and disappeared. This was the signal for a general disbanding. No cook meant no broth for us, and the professors one by one left us in the lurch. Monsieur Donnat was, as usual, absent. His mother, poor old soul, tried her hand for a day or two at boiling potatoes, but one morning the old father Donnat told us sadly: "My children, there are no more potatoes to boil—you had better all go home!"

And at once, like a flock of kids let loose from the fold, we ran off to gather tufts of thyme from the hills to carry away as a remembrance of this beautiful and beloved country—for Frigolet

signifies in the Provençal tongue a place where thyme abounds.

Then, shouldering our little bundles, by twos and threes we scattered over the valleys and hills, some up, some down, but none of us without many a backward look and sigh of regret at departing.

Poor Monsieur Donnat! After all his efforts in every direction to make his school a success, he ended his days, alas! in the almshouse.

But before taking leave of St. Michel de Frigolet, I must add one word as to what became of the old monastery. After being abandoned for twelve years it was bought by a White Monk, Father Edmond. In 1854 he restored it under the Law of Saint-Norbert, the Order of Prémontré, which had ceased to exist in France. Thanks to the activity, the preaching and collecting of this zealous missioner, the little monastery fast grew into importance. Numerous buildings, crowned with embattled walls, were added; a new church, magnificently ornamented, raised its three naves, surmounted by a couple of big clock-towers. A hundred monks or lay brothers peopled the cells, and every Sunday all the neighbourhood mounted the hillside to witness the pomp of the High Mass. In 1880 the Abbot of the White Brothers had

become so popular that upon the Republic ordering the closing of the convents, over a thousand peasants came up from the plain and shut themselves in the monastery to protest in person against the radical decree. And it was then that we saw a whole army in marching order—cavalry, infantry, generals and captains, with baggage waggons and all the apparatus of war—camping around the monastery of St. Michel de Frigolet, seriously going through this comic-opera siege, which four or five policemen, had they chosen, could easily have brought to a termination.

Every morning during this siege, which lasted a week, the country people, taking their provisions, posted themselves on the hills and spurs of the mountains which dominated the monastery, and watched from afar the progress of events. The prettiest sight I well remember was the girls from Barbentane, Boulbon, Saint-Rémy, and Maillane, encouraging the besieged with enthusiastic singing and waving of kerchiefs :

> Catholic and Provençal,
> Our faith shall know no fear.
> With ardour let us cheer,
> Catholic and Provençal.

This was alternated with invectives, jokes, and hootings addressed to the officers, as the latter

marched past with fierce aspect. Excepting only the genuine indignation aroused by the injustice of these proceedings in every heart, it would be hard to find a more burlesque siege than this of Frigolet, which furnished the subject of Sinnibaldi Doria's "Siege of Caderousse," and also a heroic poem by the Abbé Faire, neither of them half as comic as the original. Alphonse Daudet, who had already written of the convent of the White Brothers in his story "The Elixir of Brother Gaucher," also gave us, in his last romance on Tarascon, the hero Tartarin valiantly joining the besieged in the Convent of Saint-Michel.

CHAPTER VI

AT MONSIEUR MILLET'S SCHOOL

After that experience, my parents had to find me another school, not too distant from Maillane, nor of too exalted a condition, for we country people were not proud. So they placed me at a school in Avignon, with Monsieur Millet, who lived in the Rue Pétramale.

This time, it was Uncle Bénoni who acted as charioteer. Although Maillane is not more than about six miles from Avignon, at a time when no railways existed, and the roads were broken with heavy waggon wheels, and one had to cross the large bed of the Durance by ferry, the journey to Avignon was a matter of some importance.

Three of my aunts, with my mother, Uncle Bénoni, and myself, all scrambled into the cart, in which was placed a straw mattress, and thus, a goodly caravan load, we started at sunrise.

I said advisedly "three of my aunts." Few people, I am sure, can boast of as many aunts as I had. There were a round dozen. First and foremost came the Great-aunt Mistrale, then Aunt

Jeanneton, Aunt Madelon, Aunt Véronique, Aunt Poulinette, Aunt Bourdette, Aunt Françoise, Aunt Marie, Aunt Rion, Aunt Thérèse, Aunt Mélanie and Aunt Lisa. All of them, to-day, are dead and buried, but I love to say over the names of those good women, who, like beneficent fairies, each with her own special attraction, circled round the cradle of my childhood. Add to my aunts the same number of uncles, and then the cousins, their numerous progeny, and you can form some idea of my relations.

Uncle Bénoni was my mother's brother and the youngest of the family—dark, thin, loosely made, with a turned-up nose and eyes black as jet. By trade he was a land-surveyor, but he had the reputation of an idler, and was even proud of it. He had a passion for three things, however—dancing, music and jesting.

There was not a better dancer in Maillane, nor one more amusing. At the feast of Saint-Eloi or of Sainte-Agathe, when he and Jésette, the wrestler, danced the *contredanse* on the green together, every one crowded there to see him as he imitated the pigeon's flight. He played, more or less well, on every sort of instrument, violin, bassoon, horn, clarinette, but it was with the tambour-pipes that he excelled. In his youth Bénoni had not his

equal at serenading the village beauties, or for sounding the revel on a May night. And whenever there was a pilgrimage to be made, either to Notre Dame de Lumière, or to Saint-Gent, to Vaucluse or Les Saintes-Maries, Bénoni was invariably the charioteer, and the life and soul of the party, ever willing, nay, delighted, to leave his own work, the daily round of the quiet home, and to be off for a jaunt.

Parties of fifteen to twenty young people in every cart would start off at dawn, foremost among them my uncle, seated on the shaft acting as driver, and keeping up a ceaseless flow of chaff, banter and laughter, during the whole journey.

There was one strange idea he had somehow got fixed in his head, and that was, when he married, to wed no one save a girl of noble birth.

"But such girls wish to marry men of noble birth," he was warned.

"Well," retorted Bénoni, "are not we noble too, in our family? Do you imagine that we Poulinets are a set of clowns like you folk. Our ancestor was a noble exile, he wore a cloak lined with red velvet, buckles on his shoes, and silk stockings!"

At last, by dint of patient inquiries, he really did hear of a family belonging to the old aristocracy,

nearly ruined and with seven unmarried, dowerless daughters. The father, a dissipated fellow, was in the habit of selling a portion of his property every year to his creditors, and they ended by acquiring everything, even the château. So my gallant Uncle Bénoni put on his best attire, and one fine day presented himself as a suitor. The eldest of the girls, though daughter of a marquis and Commander of Malta, to escape the inevitable destiny of becoming an old maid, ended by accepting him.

It was from such a source that the pretty story entitled "Fin du Marquisat d'Aurel" was taken, written by Henri de la Madeleine, and telling of a noble family fallen to the plebeian class.

As I said, my uncle was an idle fellow. Often about the middle of the day, when he should have been digging or forking in the garden, he would fling aside his tools, and retiring to the shade, draw out his flute and start a *rigaudon*. At the sound of music, the girls at work in the neighbouring fields would come running, and forthwith he would play a *sauterelle* and start them all dancing.

In winter he seldom got up before midday.

"Where can one be so snug, so warm, as in one's bed?" he laughed.

And when we asked if he did not get bored staying in bed, his reply was :

" Not I ! When I am sleepy I sleep, and when I am not, I say psalms for the dead."

Curiously enough, this light-hearted son of Provence never missed a funeral, and the service over, he was always the last to leave the cemetery, remaining behind that he might pray for his own family and for others. Then, resuming his old gaiety, he would observe :

" Another one gone—carried into the city of Saint Repose ! "

In his turn he had also to go there. He was eighty-three and the doctor had told his family there was nothing more to be done.

" Bah," answered Bénoni, " what's the good of worrying. It is the sickest man that will die first."

He always had his flute on the table beside him.

" Those idiots gave me a bell to ring ; but I made them fetch my flute, which answers far better. If I want anything I just play an air instead of calling or ringing."

And so it happened that he died with his flute in his hand, and they placed it with him in his coffin. This gave rise to the story started by the girls of the silk-mill at Maillane, that as the clock struck twelve, old Bénoni, flute in hand, rose from

Arlesiennes at Maillane.

his grave and began playing a veritable devil's dance, whereupon all the other corpses also arose carrying their coffins, and there in the middle of the " Grand Clos," having set fire to the coffins in order to warm themselves, they proceeded to perform a mad jig round the fire till daybreak, to the sound of Bénoni's flute.

Having now introduced Uncle Bénoni, I must return to my journey with him. Accompanied by my mother and my three aunts, we all set out for Avignon. The whole way, as we jogged along, we discussed the state of the crops, the plantations, the vineyards that we passed. I was told, one after the other, all the traditional tales that marked the road to Avignon ; for example, how, at the bridge of " La Folie," the wizards formerly held their wild dances, and how at La Croisière the highwaymen would stop the traveller with ; " Your money or your life " ; this was liable to occur also at the Croix de la Lieue and the Rocher d'Aiguille.

At last we arrived at the sandy bed of the Durance. A year before the flood had swept away the bridge, and it was necessary to cross the river by a ferry-boat. We found some hundred carts there awaiting their turn to go over. We waited with the rest for about two hours, and then

embarked, after chasing home "Le Juif," the big dog, who had followed us so far.

It was past twelve o'clock when we finally reached Avignon. We stabled our horses, like all those from our village, at the Hôtel de Provence, a little inn on the Place du Corps-Saint, and for the rest of the day we roamed about the town.

"Would you like me to treat you to the theatre?" said Uncle Bénoni; "they are giving *Maniclo* and the *Bishop of Castro* this evening."

"Oh, let us go and see *Maniclo!*" we responded in chorus.

It was my first visit to the theatre and my star ordained I should see a play of Provence. As for the *Bishop of Castro,* it was a sombre piece that did not much interest us, and my aunts maintained that they played *Maniclo* much better at Maillane. For at that time, in our villages, we got up plays both comic and tragic during the winter months. I have seen the *Death of Cæsar, Zaire, Joseph and his Brethren,* played by the villagers, their costumes made up out of their wives' skirts and the counterpanes from their beds. They loved the tragedies, and followed with great pleasure the mournful declamation of the five-act piece. But they also gave *L'Avocat Pathelin,* translated into Provençale, and various

lively comedies from the Marseillaise *répertoire*. Bénoni was always the leading spirit of these evenings, where, with his violin, he accompanied the songs, and as a youngster I remember taking part in several plays and earning much applause.

The morning after *Maniclo* came the inevitable parting, and with a heart heavy as a pea that had soaked nine days, I bade farewell to my mother, and went to be shut up in the school of Monsieur Millet, Rue Pétramale. Monsieur Millet was a big man, tall, with heavy eyebrows, a red face, little pig's eyes, feet like an elephant's, hideous square fingers and slovenly appearance.

A woman from the hills, fat and uncomely, cooked for us and managed the house. I never ate so many carrots before or since, carrots badly cooked in a flour sauce. In three months, my poor little body was reduced to a skeleton.

Avignon, the predestined, where one day the Gai-Savoir was to effect the renaissance, was not at that time the bright town of to-day. She had not enlarged her Place de l'Horloge, nor widened out the Place Pic, nor constructed the Grande Rue. The Roque de Dom, which commands the town, was no lovely garden laid out as for a king, but, save for the cemetery, a bare and barren rock, while the ramparts, half in ruins,

were surrounded by ditches full of rubbish and stagnant water. Rough street-porters formed the city corporation, and made laws as they chose for the town suburbs. It was they and their chief, a sort of Hercules nicknamed "Four Arms," who swept away the Town Hall of Avignon in 1848.

Here, as in Italy, every week each house was visited by a black-clad penitent, who, face covered, with two holes for eyes, went round shaking his money-box chaunting solemnly:

"For the poor prisoners!"

In the streets one constantly ran up against all sorts of local celebrities. There was the Sister Boute-Cuire, her covered basket on her arm, and a big crucifix on her ample bosom; or the plasterer Barret, who in some street fight with the Liberals had once lost his hat, and thereupon sworn never to wear one again till Henri V. was on the throne, a vow that involved his going bare-headed for the rest of his life. And at every corner were to be seen the picturesque pensioners of Avignon, a branch of the Military Hotel in Paris, with their wide-brimmed hats and long blue capes, venerable remnants of ancient wars, maimed, lame and blind, who with wooden legs and cautious steps hammered their careful way along the cobbled pavements.

The town was passing through a state of unrest

and upheaval between the old and new *régimes*, the members of which still fought in secret. Terrible memories of past evils, abuses, reproaches, yet survived, and were very bitter between people of a certain age. The Carlists talked incessantly of the Orange Tribunal, of Jourdan Coupe-têtes, of the massacres of La Glacière. The Liberals were always ready to retaliate with the year 1815, and the assassination of Marshal Brune, whose corpse had been thrown into the Rhône, while his property was plundered and the murderers let go unpunished. Among these latter, Pointer left so notorious a reputation that, did any upstart achieve sudden success in his business, it was at once said of him, "Here are some of Maréchal Brune's *louis* cropping up again."

The people of Avignon, like those of Aix and Marseilles, and indeed of all the towns of Provence at that time, regretted the disappearance of the Lily and the White Flag. The warm sympathy on the part of our predecessors for the royal cause was not, I think, so much a political opinion as an unconscious and popular protest against the aggressive centralisation, which the Jacobinism of the first Empire had made so odious.

The Lily had always been to the Provençals (who bore it in their national coat of arms) the

symbol of a time when their customs, traditions and franchise were respected by the Government ; but to think that our fathers wished to return to the abuses which obtained before the Revolution would be a great error, for it was Provence who sent Mirabeau to the Etats Généraux, and there was no part of France where the Revolution was carried on with more passionate fervour than in Provence.

The ancient city of Avignon is so steeped in bygone glories that it is impossible to take a step without awakening some memory of the past. Close to the spot where our school was situated once stood the Convent of Sainte-Claire, and it was in that convent chapel that Petrarch first beheld his Laura one April morning in 1327.

Our quarter had other associations in those days of a more lugubrious character, owing to the near proximity of the University and the Medical School. No little shoeblack or chimney-sweep could ever be induced to come and work at our school, for it was firmly believed that the students laid in wait to catch all the small boys, for the purpose of bleeding and skinning them, and afterwards dissecting their corpses.

It was not less interesting for us, children of villages for the most part, when we went out to

ramble about in the labyrinth of alleys that formed our neighbourhood, such as the "Little Paradise," which had been a "hot quarter," and was so still, or the Street of Brandy, or of the "Cat," or the "Cock," or the Devil! But what a difference between this and the beautiful valleys all flowered with asphodel, and the fine air, the peace and the liberty of St. Michel de Frigolet. Some days my heart would ache with home-sickness, and yet Monsieur Millet, who was a good devil at bottom, ended by taming me. He was from Caderousse, a farmer's son, like myself, and he had a great admiration for the famous poem, "The Siege of Caderousse." He knew it by heart, and sometimes, while explaining some grand fight of the Greeks or the Trojans, he would suddenly give a shake to his grey tuft of hair and exclaim:

"Now see, this is one of the finest bits of Virgil, isn't it? Listen, my children, and you shall hear that Favre, the songster of the Siege of Caderousse, follows very close at Virgil's heels."

How they appealed to us, these recitations in our own tongue—so full of savour! The fat Millet would shout with laughter, and I, who had retained in my blood more than the others the honeyed essence of my childhood, found nothing

gave me more pleasure than these fruits of my own country.

Monsieur Millet would go every day about five o'clock to read the news in the Café Baretta, which he called the "Café of talking animals." It was kept, if I am not mistaken, by the uncle, or perhaps grandfather, of Mademoiselle Baretta of the Théatre-Français; then, the next day, if he were in a good temper, he would give us an epitome, not without a touch of malice, of the eternal growling of the old politicians assembled there, who at that time talked of nothing but the "Little One," as they called Henri V.

It was that year I made my first communion in the Church of Saint-Didier, and it was the bell-ringer Fanot, of whom Roumanille sang later in his "Cloche Montée," who daily rang us in for the Catechism. Two months before the confirmation Monsieur Millet took us to the church to be catechised. And there, with the other boys and girls, who were also being prepared, we were ranged in rows on benches in the middle of the nave. Chance willed that I, being among the last row of boys, should find myself next a charming little girl placed in the first row of girls. She was called Praxède, and had cheeks like the first blush of a fresh rose. Children are queer things! We

met every day, sitting next to each other, and without premeditation our elbows would touch, we would breathe in sympathy, whisper and shake over our little jokes till (the angels must have smiled to see it) we ended by actually being in love!

But what an innocent love! how full of mystic aspirations! Those same angels, if they feel for each other reciprocal affection, must know just such an emotion. We were both but twelve years old, the age of Beatrice when Dante first saw her, and it was the vision of this young budding maiden that evoked the "Paradise" of the great Florentine poet. There is an expression in our language exactly rendering this soul delight which intoxicates two young people in the first spring-time of youth, it signifies being of one accord, "*nous nous agréions*." It is true we never met except in church, but the mere sight of each other filled our hearts with happiness. I smiled at her, she smiled back, our voices were united in the same songs of divine love, we made the same signs of grace, and our souls were uplifted by the same mysteries of a simple spontaneous faith. O dawn of love, blooming with a joy as innocent as the daisy by the clear brook! First fleeting dawn of pure love!

Still I can picture Mademoiselle Praxède, as I

saw her for the last time—dressed all in white, crowned with a wreath of may, most sweet to look upon beneath her transparent veil, as she mounted the steps of the altar by my side, like a bride—lovely little bride of the Lamb.

Our confirmation once over, the episode was finished. Vainly, for long afterwards, when we passed down the Rue de la Lice, where she lived, my hungry eyes scanned the green shutters of the home of Praxède, but I never saw her again. She had been sent to a convent school. The thought that my sweet little friend of the rosy cheeks and charming smile was lost to me for ever gave me a disgust for everything in life, and I fell into a state of languor and melancholy.

When the holidays arrived and I returned to the farm, my mother found me pale and feverish, and decided, in order both to cure and to divert me, that I should go with her on a pilgrimage to Saint-Gent, the patron of all those suffering from fever.

To Saint-Gent is also attributed the power of sending rain, which makes him a sort of demi-god to the peasants on both sides of the Durance.

"I went to Saint-Gent before the Revolution," said my father. "I was ten years old and I walked the whole way barefoot with my poor mother. But we had more faith in those days."

So we started one fine night in September, by the light of the moon, with Uncle Bénoni, of whom I have already spoken, as driver.

Other pilgrims bound for the fête joined us from Château-Renard, from Noves, Thor, and from Pernes, their carts, covered like our own with canvas stretched over wooden hoops, formed a long procession down the road. Singing and shouting in chorus the canticle of Saint-Gent, a magnificent old tune—Gounod, by the way, introduced it into his opera of *Mireille*—we passed through the sleeping villages to the sound of cracking whips, and not till the following afternoon about four o'clock did we all arrive at the Gorge de Bausset, where, with "Long live Saint-Gent," we descended. There, in the very place where the venerated hermit passed his days of penitence, the old people repeated to the younger ones all they had heard tell of the saint.

"Gent," they said, "was one of us, the son of peasants, a fine youth from Monteux, who, at the age of fifteen, retired into the desert to consecrate himself to God. He tilled the earth with two cows. One day a wolf attacked and devoured one of his cows. Gent caught the wolf, and harnessing him to the plough, made him work, yoked with the other cow. Meanwhile at Monteux, since

Gent departed, no rain had fallen for seven years, so the Montelaix said to his mother Imberti :

" Good woman, you must go and find your son and tell him that since he left us we have not had a drop of rain."

The mother of Gent, by dint of searching and crying, at last found her son, here, where we are at this moment, in the Gorge de Bausset, and as his mother was thirsty, Gent pressed the steep rock with two of his fingers and two springs jetted forth, one of wine, the other of water. The spring of wine has dried up, but the water runs still, and it is as the hand of God for healing all bad fevers.

There are two yearly pilgrimages to the Hermitage of Saint-Gent. The first one, in May, is specially for the country people, the Montelaix, and they carry his statue from Monteux to Bausset, a pilgrimage of some six miles, made on foot in memory of the flight of the saint.

Here is the letter which Aubanel wrote to me in 1866, when he also made the pilgrimage.

" My dear Friend,—With Grivolas I have just returned from a pilgrimage to Saint-Gent. It is a wonderful, sublime, and poetical experience, and that nocturnal journey bearing the image of the

saint has left on my soul a unique impression. The mayor lent us a carriage, and we followed with the pilgrims through fields and woods by the light of the moon, to the song of nightingales, from eight o'clock in the evening till past midnight. It was so impressive and mysterious—strange and beautiful—that one felt the tears start. Four youths lightly clothed in nankin, running like hares, flying like birds, set out with the sacred burden, preceded by a man on horseback, galloping and signalling their approach with pistol-shots. The people of the farms hurried out to see the saint pass, men, women, children and old people, stopped the carriers, kissing the statue, praying, weeping, gesticulating. Then off went the bearers again more swiftly than ever, while the women cried after them :

"'Happy journey, boys.'

"And the men added :

"'May the good saint uphold you.'

"And so they run till they pant for breath. Oh ! that journey through the night, and that little troop going forth into the darkness under the protection of God and Saint-Gent, into the desert, no one knew whither. I assure you there was in all this a profound note of poetry that made an indelible impression on my mind."

The second pilgrimage of Saint-Gent takes place in September, and it was to that we went. Now as Saint-Gent had only been canonised by the voice of the people, the priests take very little notice of him, and the townsfolk still less. It is the people of the soil who recognise the right of the good saint to be canonised, he who was simply one of themselves, spoke and worked even as they, and who, with but moderate delays, sends them the rain they pray for, and cures their fevers. His cult is so fervent that, in the narrow gorge dedicated to the legend of his memory, sometimes as many as 20,000 pilgrims are assembled.

Tradition records that Saint-Gent slept on a bed of stone with his head down and his feet up ; so all the pilgrims, in a spirit of devotion not unmixed with gaiety, go and lie like fallen trees in the bed of Saint-Gent, which is a hollow formed in the sloping rock ; the women also place themselves there, carefully holding each other's skirts in a decorous position.

We, too, lay in the stone bed like the others, and I went with my mother to see the " Spring of the Wolf," and the " Spring of the Cow." Then on to the Chapel of Saint-Gent, surrounded by a group of old walnut-trees, and containing his tomb. And lastly, we visited the " terrible rock,"

as the old canticle calls it, from whence flows the miraculous fount which cures fever.

Full of wonder at all these tales, these beliefs and visions, my soul intoxicated by the scent of the plants and the sight of this place, still hallowed by the impress of the saint's feet, with the beautiful faith of my twelve years I drank freely of the spring, and—people may think what they please—from that moment I had no more fever. Therefore do not be astonished that the daughter of the Félibre, the poor Mireille, when lost in the Crau and dying of thirst, calls on the good Saint-Gent to come to her rescue. (*Mireille,* Song viii.)

On my return to Avignon, a new arrangement was made for carrying on our classes. We continued to live at the school of the fat Monsieur Millet, but were taken twice a day to the Royal College, to attend the University course as day scholars, and it was in this way that for five years (1843-1847) I continued my education.

The masters of the college were not then, as now, young professors with degrees and coats of the latest cut. The professional chairs were occupied in our day by some of the drastic grey-beards of the old University. For example, in the fourth class we had the worthy Monsieur Blanc,

formerly a sergeant-major in the Imperial army, who, when our replies were inadequate, promptly hurled at our heads the first book he could lay hands on. In another class, Monsieur Lamy, a rabid classic, who held in abhorrence the innovations of Victor Hugo; while for rhetoric we had a rough patriot named Monsieur Chaulaire, who detested the English, and with vehement emotion, banging his fist on the desk, was wont to recite to us the warlike songs of Béranger.

One year I remember specially, for how it happened I have no idea, but at the distribution of prizes in the church of the college, in presence of the assembled fine world of Avignon, I found myself carrying off all the prizes, even that for conduct. Every time my name was called, I timidly advanced to fetch the beautiful book and the laurel crown from the hand of the head-master, then, returning through the applauding crowd, I threw my trophies in my mother's lap, and every one turned to look with curiosity and astonishment at the beautiful Provençale who, her face beaming with happiness but still calm and dignified, piled up in her rush basket the laurels of her son. Afterwards, at the farm—*sic transit gloria mundi*—these aforesaid laurels were placed on the chimney-piece behind the pots.

Whatever was done, however, in the way of education to distract me from my natural bent, the love of my own language remained always my ruling passion, and many circumstances tended to nurture it.

On one occasion, having read, in I forget what journal, some Provençal verses of Jasmin to Loïsa Puget, and recognising that there were poets who still glorified the *langue d'Oc*, seized with a fine enthusiasm, I did likewise for the celebrated hairdresser, and composed an appreciation which begins thus :

Poet, honour to thy Gascon mother!

but, poor little chap, I received no answer. Of course I know the poor 'prentice verses deserved none, but—no use denying it—this disdain hurt me, and when in after life I in my turn received such offerings, remembering my own discomfort, I always felt it a duty to acknowledge them with courtesy.

About the age of fourteen, the longing for my native fields and the sound of my native tongue grew on me to such a degree that it ended by making me quite ill from home-sickness.

Like the prodigal son, I said to myself, " How much happier are the servants and shepherds of our farm, down there, who eat the good bread that

my mother provides; the friends of my childhood, too, my comrades of Maillane, who live at liberty in the country, labouring, sowing, reaping, and gathering olives, beneath the blessed sun of God, than I who drudge between four walls, over translations and compositions."

My sorrow was mixed with a strong distaste for the unreal world where I was immured, and with a constant drawing towards some vague ideal which I discerned in the blue distance of the horizon. So it fell out that one day while reading, I think, the *Magazin des Familles*, I came upon a description of the silent and contemplative life of the Monks of La Chartreuse at Valbonne.

Thereupon I became possessed with the idea of this conventual life, and escaping from the school one fine afternoon I set out alone, determined and desperate, on the road to Pont Saint-Esprit, which winds along the banks of the Rhône, for I knew Valbonne was somewhere in that neighbourhood.

"There," I said to myself, "I will go and knock at the door of the convent, imploring and weeping until they consent to admit me. Then once inside I will roam all day, in bliss, among the trees of the forest—I will steep myself in thoughts of God and sanctify myself as did the good Saint-Gent."

Then suddenly a thought arrested me :

" And thy mother," I said to myself, " to whom, miserable boy, thou hast not even bidden farewell, and who, when she learns thou hast disappeared, will seek thee by hill and by dale, poor woman, weeping disconsolate as did the mother of Gent ! "

Turning about, with a heavy heart and hesitating steps I made my way back to the farm, in order to embrace my parents once more before forsaking the world ; but the nearer I drew to the paternal home, the faster my monkish ideas and proud resolution melted in the warmth of my filial love, as a ball of snow dissolves before the fire. At the door of the farm, where I arrived late, my mother cried out in astonishment at the sight of me :

" But why have you left your school before the holidays ? "

And I, already ashamed of my flight, replied in a broken voice : " I am home-sick—I cannot go back to that fat old Millet, where one has only carrots to eat."

But the next day our shepherd, Ronquet, took me back to my abhorred jail, with the promise, however, that I should be liberated at the end of the term.

CHAPTER VII

THREE EARLY FELIBRES

Like the cats who continually move their young ones from place to place, at the opening of the next school year my mother took me off to Monsieur Dupuy, a native of Carpentras, who kept a school in Avignon near the Pont-Troué. And here, in furtherance of my ambitions as a budding Provençalist, I had indeed my "nozzle in the hay."

Monsieur Dupuy was the brother of Charles Dupuy, a former Deputy of La Drôme, and author of "Petit Papillons," a delicate morsel of our modern Provençal. Our Dupuy also tried his hand at Provençal poetry, but he did not boast about it, and therein showed wisdom.

Shortly after my arrival, there came to the school a young professor with a fine black beard, a native of Saint-Rémy, whose name was Joseph Roumanille. As we were neighbours—Maillane and Saint-Rémy being in the same canton—and our families, both of the farming class, had known each other for years past, we were soon friends.

Before long I found another bond which drew us still closer, namely, that the young professor was also interested in writing verses in the language of Provence.

On Sundays we went to Mass and vespers at the Carmelite church. Our places were behind the High Altar, in the choir-stalls, and there our young voices mingled with those of the choristers, among whom was Denis Cassan, another Provençal poet, and one of the most popular at the carousals of the students' quarter. We saw him, however, clad in a surplice, with a foolish phlegmatic air, as he intoned the responses and psalms. The street where he lived now bears his name.

One Sunday during vespers, the idea came into my head to render in Provençal verse the penitential psalms, so in the half-opened book I began furtively to scribble down my version in pencil.

But Monsieur Roumanille, who was in charge, came behind me, and seizing the paper I was writing, read it and then showed it to the headmaster, Monsieur Dupuy. The latter, it seems, viewed the matter leniently; so after vespers, during our walk round the ramparts, Roumanille called me to him.

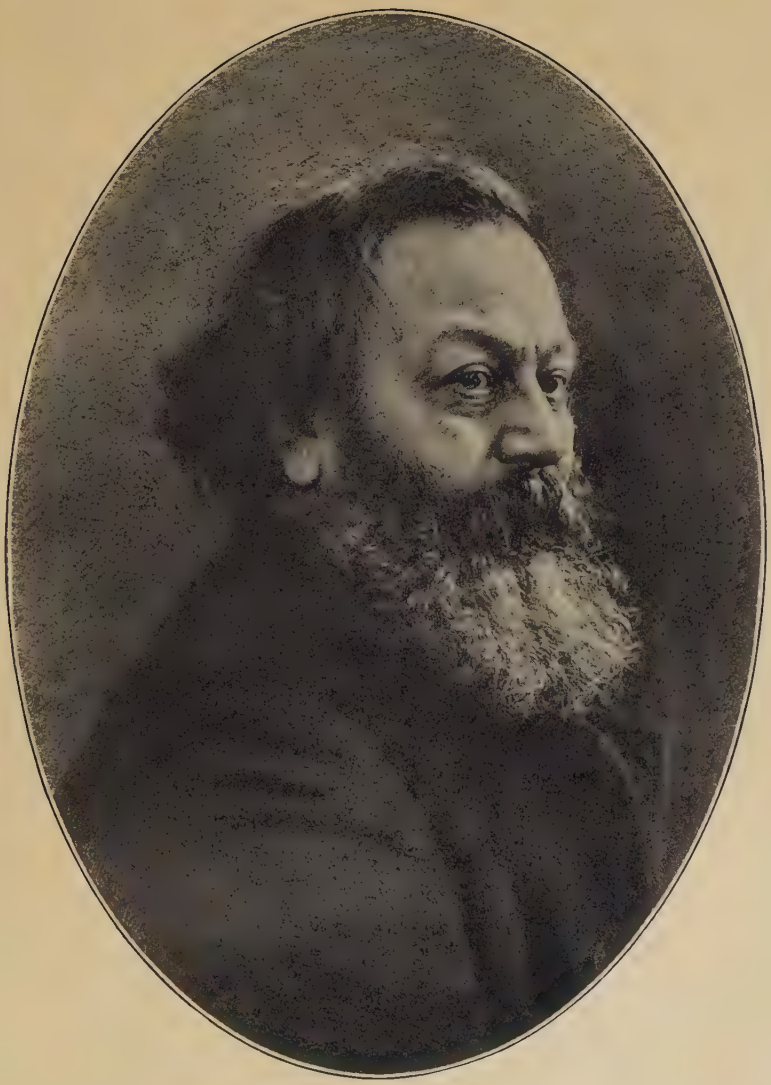
"So, my little Mistral, you amuse yourself by writing verses in Provençal?"

"Sometimes," I admitted.

"Would you like me to repeat you some verses. Listen!" And then in his deep sympathetic voice he recited to me one after another of his own poems—"Les Deux Agneux," "Le Petit Joseph," "Paulon," Madeleine et Louisette," a veritable outburst of April flowers and meadow blooms, heralds of the Félibrean spring time. Filled with delight, I listened, feeling that here was the dawn for which my soul had been waiting to awake to the light.

Up to that time I had only read a few stray scraps in the Provençal, and it had always aggravated me to find that our language (Jasmin and the Marquis de Lafare alone excepted) was usually used only in derision. But here was Roumanille, with this splendid voice of his, expressing, in the tongue of the people, with dignity and simplicity, all the noblest sentiments of the heart.

Thus it came to pass that notwithstanding the difference of a dozen years between our ages, for Roumanille was born in 1818, we clasped hands, he happy to find a confidant quite prepared to understand his muse, and I, trembling with joy at entering the sanctuary of my dreams; and thus, as sons of the same God, we were united in



Joseph Roumanille.

the bonds of friendship under so happy a star that for half a century we walked together, devoted to the same patriotic cause, without our affection or our zeal ever knowing diminution.

Roumanille had sent his first verses to a Provençal journal, *Boui-Abaisso*, which was published weekly at Marseilles by Joseph Désanat, and which for the bards of the day was an admirable outlet. For the language has never lacked exponents, and especially at the time of the *Boui-Abaisso* (1841–1846) there was a strong movement at Marseilles in favour of the dialect, which, had it done nothing but promote writing in Provençal, deserves our gratitude.

Also we must recognise that such popular poets as Désanat of Tarascon, or Bellot Chailan, Bénédit and Gelu, pre-eminently Gelu, each of whom in his way expressed the buoyant joyous spirit of southern Provence, have never, in their particular line, been surpassed. Another, Camille Reyband, a poet of Carpentras, a poet, too, of noble dimensions, in a grand epistle he addressed to Roumanille, laments the fate of the Provençal speech, neglected by idiots who, declares he, "Follow the example of the gentlemen of the towns, and leave to the wise old forefathers our unfortunate language while they render the French

tongue, which they fundamentally distort into the worst of *patois*."

Reyband seemed to foretell the Renaissance which was then hatching when he made this appeal to the editor of the *Boui-Abaisso*:

"Before we separate, my brothers, let us defend ourselves against oblivion. Together let us build up a colossal edifice, some Tower of Babel made from the bricks of Provence. At the summit, whilst singing, engrave your names, for you, my friends, are worthy to be remembered. As for me, whom a grain of praise intoxicates and overcomes, and who only sings as does the cicada, and can but contribute towards your monument a pinch of gravel and a little poor cement, I will dig for my Muse a tomb in the sand, and when, having finished your imperishable work, you look down, my brothers, from the height of your blue sky, you will no longer be able to see me."

All these gentlemen were, however, imbued with this erroneous idea that the language of the people, good though they felt it to be, was only suitable for common or droll subjects, and hence they took no pains either to purify or to restore it.

Since the time of Louis XIV. the old traditions for the spelling of our language had become almost obsolete. The poets of the meridian had, partly

through carelessness or ignorance, adopted the French spelling. And this utterly false system cut at the root of our beautiful speech. Every one began to carry out his own orthographical fancies, until it reached such a point that the various dialects of the Oc language, owing to this constant disfigurement in the writing, no longer bore any resemblance one to another.

Roumanille, when reading the manuscripts of Saboly in the library at Avignon, was struck by the good effect of our language when written in the old style employed by the ancient troubadours. He wished, young as I was, to have my help in restoring the true orthography, and in perfect accord concerning the plan of reform, we boldly started in to moult, as it were, and renew the skin of our language. Instinctively we felt that for the unknown work which awaited us in the future we should need a fine tool, a tool freshly ground. For the orthography was not all. Owing to the imitative and middle-class spirit of prejudice, which unfortunately is ever on the increase, many of the most gritty words of the Provençal tongue had been discarded as vulgar, and in their place, the poets who preceded the Félibres, even those of repute, had commonly employed, without any critical sense, corrupt forms and bastard words

of uneducated French. Having thus determined, Roumanille and I, to write our verses in the language of the people, we saw it was necessary to bring out strongly the energy, freshness, and richness of expression that characterised it, and to render the pureness of speech used in districts untouched by extreme influences.

Even so the Roumanians, the poet Alexander tells us, when they wished to elevate their national tongue which the *bourgeois* class had lost or corrupted, went to seek it out in the villages and mountains among the primitive peasants.

In order to conform the written Provençal as much as possible to the pronunciation in general use in Provence, we decided to suppress certain letters or etymological finals fallen into disuse, such as the "s" of the plural, the "t" of the particle, the "r" of the infinitive, and the "ch" in certain words like "fach," "dich," "puech," &c.

But let no one think that these innovations, though they concerned none save a small circle of *patois* poets, as we were then called, were introduced into general usage without a severe struggle. From Avignon to Marseilles, all those who wrote or rhymed in the language contested for their routine or their fashion, and promptly took the field against the reformers. A war of pamphlets

containing envenomed articles between these opponents and we young Avignons continued to rage for many years.

At Marseilles, the exponents of trivialities, the white-beard rhymesters, the envious and the growlers assembled together of an evening behind the old bookshop of the librarian Boy, there bitterly to bewail the suppression of the "s" and sharpen their weapons against the innovators.

Roumanille the valiant, ever ready to stand in the breech, launched against the adversaries the Greek fire we were all diligently employed in preparing in the crucible of the Gai-Savoir. And because we had on our side, not only a just and good cause, but faith, enthusiasm, youth—and something else besides—it ended in our being, as I will show you later, victors on the field of battle.

But to return to the school of Monsieur Dupuy.

One afternoon we were in the courtyard, playing at "Three jumps," when in our midst appeared a new pupil. He was tall and well made, with a Henri IV. nose, a hat cocked to one side, and an air of maturity heightened by the unlit cigar in his mouth. His hands thrust in the pockets of his short coat, he came up just as if he were one of us.

"Well, what are you after?" said he. "Would you like me to see if I can do these three jumps?"

And without more ado, light as a cat, he took a run and went three hands beyond the highest jump that had been touched. We clapped him, and demanded where he had sprung from.

"From Châteauneuf," he answered—"the country where they grow good wine. Perhaps you have never heard of Châteauneuf, Châteauneuf-du-Pape?"

"Yes, we have. And what is your name?"

"Anselme Mathieu," he replied.

And with these words he plunged his two hands into his pockets and brought out a store of old cigar-ends, which he offered round with a courteous and smiling air.

We, who for the most part had never dared to smoke (unless, indeed, as children the roots of the mulberry-tree), thereupon regarded with great respect this hero, who did things in so grand a manner, and was evidently accustomed to high life.

Thus it was that I first met Mathieu, the gentle author of the "Farandole." On one occasion, I told this story to our friend Daudet, who loved Mathieu, and the idea of the old ends of cigars pleased him so much that in his romance "Jack,"

he makes use of it with his little negro prince, who performs the same act of largess.

With Roumanille and Mathieu, we were thus a trio who formed the nucleus of those who a little later were to found the Félibrige. The gallant Mathieu—heaven knows how he contrived it—was never seen except at the hours of food or recreation. On account of his already grown-up air, though not more than sixteen, and certainly backward in his studies, he had been allowed a room on the top story under the pretext that he could thus work more freely, and there in his attic, the walls of which he had decorated with pictures, nude figures and plaster casts of Pradier, all day long he dreamed and smoked, made verses, and, a good part of the time, leant out of the window, watching the people below, or the sparrows carrying food to their young under the eaves. Then he would joke, rather broadly, with Mariette the chamber-maid, ogle the master's daughter, and, when he descended from his heights, relate to us all sorts of gossip.

But on one subject he always took himself seriously, and that was his patent of nobility: "My ancestors were marquises," he told us gravely, "Marquises of Montredon. At the time of the Revolution, my grandfather gave up his title, and afterwards, finding himself ruined, he

would not resume it since he could not keep it up properly."

There was always something romantic and elusive in the existence of Mathieu. He would disappear at times like the cats who go to Rome.

In vain we would call him : " Mathieu ! "

But no Mathieu would appear. Where was he ? Up there among the tiles, and over the house-tops he would make his way to the trysts he held, so he told us, with a girl beautiful as the day.

On one occasion, while we were all watching the procession of the Fête-Dieu at Pont-Troué, Mathieu said to me :

" Frédéric, shall I show you my beloved ? "

" Rather ! " I replied promptly.

" Very well," said he. " Now look, when the young choir-maidens pass, shrouded in their white tulle veils, notice they will all wear a flower pinned in the middle of their dress, but one, you will see, fair as a thread of gold, she will wear her flower at the side. . . . See," he cried presently, " there she is ! "

" Why, my dear fellow, she is a star ! " I cried with enthusiasm. " How have you managed to make a conquest of such a lovely girl ? "

" I will tell you. She is the daughter of the confectioner at the Carretterie. From time to

time I went there to buy some peppermint drops or pastry-fingers—in this way I arrived at making myself known to the dear child, as the Marquis de Montredon, and one day when she was alone in the shop, I said to her : ' Beauteous maiden, if only I could know that you are as foolish as I am, I would propose an excursion.'

" ' Where ? ' she inquired.

" ' To the moon,' I answered.

" She burst out laughing, but I continued : ' This is how it could be done. You, my darling, would mount to the terrace which runs along the top of your house, just at any hour when you could or you would, and I, who lay my heart and my fortune at your feet, would meet you, and there beneath the sky I would cull for you the flowers of love.'

" And so it came to pass. At the top of my beloved one's house, as in many others, there is a platform where they dry the linen. I have nothing to do but climb on the roof, and from gutter-spout to gutter-spout I go to find my fair one, who there spreads or folds the washing. Then, hand in hand, lip against lip, but always courteously as between lady and cavalier, we are in Paradise."

And thus it was that our Anselme, future Félibre of the Kisses, studied his Breviary of Love, and

passed his classes in gentle ease on the house-tops of Avignon.

At the Royal College, where we attended the history classes, there was never any question of modern politics. But Sergeant Monnier, one of our masters, an enthusiastic Republican, could not resist taking upon himself this instruction. During the recreation hour, he would walk up and down the courtyard, a history of the Revolution in his hand, working himself up as he read aloud, gesticulating, swearing, and shouting with enthusiasm.

"Now this is fine! Listen to this! Oh, they were grand men! Camille Desmoulins, Mirabeau, Bailly, Virgniaud, Danton, Saint-Just, Boisset-d'Anglas! We are worms in this day, by all the gods! besides those giants of the National Convention!"

"Oh, very grand indeed, your mock giants!" Roumanille would answer when he happened to be there. "Cut-throats, over-throwers of the Crucifix, unnatural monsters, ever devouring one another! Why, Bonaparte, when he wanted them, brought them up like pigs in the market!"

And so they would attack each other until the easy-going Mathieu appeared on the scene and made peace by causing both to join in a laugh at some absurdity of his own.

About this time Roumanille, in order to supplement his little emolument, had taken a post as reader in Sequin's printing house, and, thanks to this position, he was able to have his first volume of verses, "Les Paquerettes," printed there at small cost. While he corrected his proofs, he would regale us with these poems, much to our delight.

Thus one day succeeded another in these simple and familiar surroundings, till in the month of August 1847 I finished my studies, and, happy as a foal released and turned out to grass, I bade farewell to Monsieur Dupuy's school and returned home to the farm.

But before leaving the pontifical city, I must say one word about the religious pomps and shows which, in our young day, were celebrated in high state at Avignon for a fortnight at a time. Notre Dame-de-Dom (the cathedral), and the four parishes, Saint-Agricol, Saint-Pierre, Saint-Didier, and Saint-Symphorien, rivalled each other in their splendour.

So soon as the sacristan, ringing his bell, had gone along the streets proclaiming where the Host, borne beneath the daïs, was to pass, all the town set to work sweeping, watering, strewing green boughs, and erected decorations. From the

balconies of the rich were hung tapestries of embroidered silks and damasks, the poor from their windows hung out coverings of patchwork, their rugs and quilts. At the Portail-Maillanais and in the low quarters of the city, they covered the walls with white sheets and adorned the pavements with a litter of boxwood. Street altars were raised at intervals, high as pyramids, adorned with candelabrums and vases of flowers. All the people, sitting outside their houses on chairs, awaited the procession and ate little cakes.

The young men of the mercantile and artisan classes walked about, swaggering and eyeing the young girls, or throwing them roses as they sat beneath the awnings, while all along the streets the scent of incense filled the air.

At last came the procession, headed by the beadle clad all in red, and followed by a train of white-robed virgins, the confraternities, monks and priests, choirs and musicians, threading their way slowly to the beating of tambourines, and one heard as they passed the low murmur of the devout reciting their rosaries.

Then, while an impressive silence reigned everywhere, all prostrated themselves, and the officiating priest elevated the Host beneath a shower of yellow broom.

But one of the most striking things was the procession of Penitents, which began after sunset by the light of torches. And especially that of the White Penitents, wearing their cowls and cloaks, and marching past step by step, like ghosts, carrying, some of them, small tabernacles, others reliquaries or bearded busts, others burning perfumes, or an enormous eye in a triangle, or a serpent twisted round a tree—one might have imagined them to be an Indian procession of Brahmins.

These Orders dated from the time of the League and the Western Schism, and the heads and dignitaries of these confraternities were taken from the noblest families in Avignon. Aubanel, one of our great Félibres, was all his life a zealous White Penitent, and, at his death, was buried in the habit of the brotherhood.

CHAPTER VIII

HOW I TOOK MY DEGREE

"WELL now," said my father, "have you finished?"

"I have finished, so far," I replied, "only . . . I will now have to go to Nîmes and take my bachelor's degree—a step which gives me a certain amount of apprehension."

"Forward then—quick march! When I was a soldier, my son, we had harder steps than that to take before the Siege of Figuières," said my sire.

So I made my preparations forthwith for the journey to Nîmes, where at that time the degrees were taken. My mother folded up my Sunday coat and two white shirts in a big check handkerchief fastened together with four pins. My father presented me with a small linen bag containing crowns to the amount of £6, and added the caution:

"Take thou care neither to lose nor to squander them."

My bundle under my arm, hat cocked over one ear, and a vine-stick in my hand, I then departed.

Arrived at Nîmes, I met a crowd of other students from all the neighbourhood, come up, like myself, to take their degrees. They were for the most part accompanied by their parents, fine-looking ladies and gentlemen with their pockets full of letters of introduction, one to the Prefect, another to the Grand Vicar, and another to the head examiner. These fortunate youths swaggered about with an air which said: "We are cocksure of success."

I who knew not a soul felt myself very small fry. All my hope lay in Saint Baudile, the patron of Nîmes whose votive ribbon I had worn as a child, and to whom I now addressed a fervent petition that he would incline the hearts of the examiners towards me.

We were shut up in a big bare room of the Hôtel de Ville, and there an old professor dictated to us in nasal tones some Latin verse. He terminated with a pinch of snuff, and the announcement that we had an hour in which to render the Latin into French.

Full of zeal we set to work. With the aid of the dictionary, the task was accomplished, and at the termination of the hour our snuff-taker collected the papers and dismissed us for the day.

The students dispersed all over the town and

I found myself standing there alone in the street, my small bundle under my arm and vine-stick in hand. The first thing was to find a lodging, some inn not too ruinous yet passably comfortable. As I had plenty of time on my hands, I made the tour of Nîmes about ten times, scanning the hostelries and inns with critical eye. But the hotels, with their black-coated flunkeys, who looked me up and down long before I even approached them, and the airs and graces of the fashionable folk of whom I saw passing glimpses, made me coil up into my shell.

At last a sign-board caught my eye with the inscription, "Au Petit-Saint-Jean." Here was something familiar at last.

The name made me at once feel at home. Saint John was a special friend with us, he it was who brought good harvests, also we grew the grass of Saint John, ate the apples of Saint John, and celebrated his feast with bonfires. I entered the little inn with confidence therefore, a confidence which was amply justified.

In the courtyard were covered carts and trucks, while groups of Provençales stood there laughing and gossiping. I stepped into the dining-room and sat down at the table. The room was crowded and nearly all the seats occupied by market-

gardeners. They had come in from Saint-Rémy, Château-Renard, Barbentane, for the weekly market, and were all well acquainted. Their conversation related entirely to their business :

" Well, Benezet," said one, " how much did your mad-apples fetch to-day ? "

" Bad luck ; the market was glutted—I had to give them away."

" And the leek-seed ? " asked another.

" There is a fair prospect of a sale—if the rumour of war turns out true they will use it for making powder, so they say."

" And the onions ? "

" They went off at once."

" And the pumpkins ? "

" Had to give them to the pigs."

For an hour I listened to this on all sides, eating steadily without saying a word. Then my opposite neighbour addressed me :

" And you, young man ? If it is not indiscreet, may I ask if you are in the gardening line ? "

" I replied modestly that I had come to Nîmes for another purpose, namely, to pass as bachelor."

The company turned round and gazed at me with interest.

" What did he say," they asked each other ; " Bachelor ? He must have said ' battery '

hazarded one—it is a conscript, any one can see, and he wishes to get into the battery."

I laughed and tried to explain my position and the ordeal before me when the learned professors would put me through my paces in Latin, Greek, mathematics, chemistry, astronomy, philosophy, and every imaginable branch of knowledge besides. "If we do well they allow us to become lawyers, doctors, judges, even sub-prefects," I concluded.

"And if you do badly?" inquired my audience eagerly.

"We are sent back to the asses' bench," I replied; "to-morrow I shall know my fate."

"Eh, but this is one of the right sort," they cried in chorus. "Suppose we all remain on another day to see whether he comes through all right or whether he is left in the hole. Now, what are they going to ask you to-morrow, for example?"

I told them it would be concerning all the battles that had ever been fought since the world began, Jews, Romans, Saracens; and not only the battles but the names of the generals who took part in them, the kings and queens reigning at the time, together with their children and even their bastards.

"But how then can the learned men occupy themselves with such trifles!" cried my new friends. "It is very evident they have nothing

better to do. If they had to get up and hoe potatoes every morning they would not waste time over the battles of the Saracens, who are dead and gone, or the bastards of Herod. Well, what else do they ask you ? "

I replied that I should be required also to know the names of all the mountains and all the rivers in the world.

Here I was interrupted by a gardener from Saint-Rémy with a big guttural voice, who inquired whether I knew where was the source of the Fountain of Vaucluse, and if it were true that seven rivers, each of them big enough to float a ship, sprang from that fountain. He had it on good authority also—could I confirm it ?—that a shepherd had let fall his crook in the water at Vaucluse, and had found it again in a spring at Saint-Rémy !

I had hardly time to think of a suitable and judicious answer before another of the company posed me with the question as to why the sea was salt.

Here I considered myself on safe ground, and was beginning to reel off in airy fashion : " Because it contains sulphate of potassium, sulphate of magnesia, chloride—— "

" No, no, that's all wrong," interrupted my

questioner. "It was a fisherman who told me—he was from Martigne and should know. The sea is salt owing to the many ships carrying cargoes of salt which have been wrecked during past years."

I discreetly gave way before this authority and hastened to enumerate other subjects on which I was about to be examined by the professors, such as the cause of thunder, lightning, frost and wind.

"Allow me to interrupt you, young man," broke in the first speaker again. "You should be able then to tell us from whence comes the mistral, that accursed mischievous wind of our country. I have always heard that it issues from a hole in a certain great rock, and that if one could only cork up the hole, there would be an end of the mistral. Now that would be an invention worth the making!"

"The Government would oppose it," said another; "if it were not for the mistral, Provence would be the garden of France! Nothing would hold us back—we should become too rich to please the rest."

"Finally," I continued, "we have to know all about the number, size, and distance of the stars—how many miles our earth is from the sun, &c."

"That passes everything," cried a native of Noves. "Who is going up there to measure the

distance? Cannot you see, young man, that the professors are laughing at you? A pretty science indeed to measure the miles between the sun and the moon; they will be teaching you next that pigeons are suckled! Now if you would tell me at what quarter of the moon to sow celery or to cure the pig-disease, I would say, 'Here we have a real useful science'—but all this boy prates of is pure rubbish!"

The rest of the company, however, stood up for me loyally, declaring that, however, questionable the subjects I had studied, it was certain I must have a wonderful head to have stowed away such a lot inside.

Some of the girls whispered together, with kindly glances of sympathy in my direction. "Poor little chap, how pale he is—one can see all that reading has done him no good—if he had passed his time at the tail of the plough he would have more colour in his cheeks—and what is the good after all of knowing so much!"

"Well, comrades," cried my first friend, "I vote we see him through to the end, this lad from Maillane! If we were at a bull-fight we should wait to see who got the prize, or at least the cockade. —Let us stay over night that we may know if he passes as a bachelor, eh?"

"Good," agreed the rest in chorus, "we will wait and see him through to the end."

The following morning, with my heart in my mouth, I returned to the Hôtel de Ville, together with the other candidates, many of whom I noticed wore a far less confident air than the day before. In a big hall, seated before a long table piled with papers and books, were five great and learned professors come expressly from Montpellier arrayed in their ermine-bordered capes and black caps. They were members of the Faculty of Letters, and among them, curiously enough, was Monsieur Saint-René Taillandier, who, a few years later, was to become the warm supporter of the Félibre movement. But at this time we were, of course, strangers to each other, and nothing would have more surprised the illustrious professor than had he known that the country lad who stood stammering before him was one day to be numbered among his best friends.

I was wild with joy—I had passed! I went off down into the town as though borne along by angels. It was broiling hot, and I remember I was thirsty. As I passed the cafés, swinging my little vine-stick high in the air, I panted at the sight of the glasses of foaming beer, but I was such a novice in the ways of the world that I had never

yet set foot inside a café, and I dared not go in.

So I continued my triumphal march round the town, wearing an air of such radiant happiness and satisfaction that the very passers-by nudged one another and observed: "He has evidently got his degree—that one!"

When at last I came upon a drinking-fountain and quenched my thirst in the fresh cool water, I would not have changed places with the 'King of Paris.'

But the finest thing of all was on my return to the "Petit-Saint-Jean," where my friends the gardeners awaited me impatiently. On seeing me, glowing with joy enough to disperse a fog, they shouted: "He has passed!"

Men, women, girls, came rushing out, and there followed a grand handshaking and embracing all round. One would have said manna had fallen from heaven.

Then my friend from Saint-Rémy took up the speech. His eyes were wet with emotion.

"Maillanais!" he addressed me, "we are all pleased with you. You have shown these little professor gentlemen that not only ants, but men, can be born of the soil. Come, children, let us all have a turn at the *farandole*."

Then taking hands, there in the courtyard of the inn, we all farandoled with a will. After that we dined with equal heartiness, eating, drinking and singing, till the time came to start for home.

It is fifty-eight years ago. But I never visit Nîmes and see in the distance the sign of the "Petit-Saint-Jean" without that scene of my youth coming back to me fresh as yesterday, and a warm feeling arises in my heart for those dear people who first made me experience the good fellowship of my kind and the joys of popularity.

CHAPTER IX

DAME RIQUELLE AND THE REPUBLIC OF 1848

THE winter of 1847–1848 began happily enough. The people settled down quietly again to their business of making a tolerably good harvest, and the hateful subject of politics was dropped, thank God. In our country of Maillane we even started, for our amusement, some representations of popular tragedies and comedies, into which I threw myself with all the fervour of my seventeen years. Then in the month of February, suddenly the Revolution burst upon us, and good-bye to all the gentle arts of blessed peace-time.

At the entrance of the village, in a small vine-clad cottage, there dwelt at this time a worthy old body named Riquelle. She wore the Arlesian dress of bygone days, her large white coife surmounted by a broad-brimmed black felt hat, while a white band, passing under the chin, framed her cheeks. By her distaff and the produce of her small plot of ground she supported herself, but one saw from the care she took of her person, as well as by her speech, that she had known better days.

My first recollection of Riquelle dated back to when, at about seven years old, I was in the habit of passing her door on my way to school. Seated on the little bench at her threshold, her fingers busy knitting, she would call to me:

"Have you not some fine tomatoes on your farm, my little lad? Bring me one next time you come along."

Time after time she asked me this, and I, boy-like, invariably forgot all about it, till one day I mentioned to my father that old Riquelle never saw me without asking for tomatoes.

"The accursed old dame," growled my father angrily; "tell her they are not ripe, do you hear, neither have they ripened for many a long year."

The next time I saw Riquelle I gave her this message, and she dropped the subject.

Many years later, the day after the Proclamation of the Revolution of 1848, coming to the village to inquire the latest news, the first person I saw was Dame Riquelle standing there in her doorway, all alert and animated, with a great topaz ring blazing on her finger.

"Hé, but the tomatoes have ripened this year," she cried out to me. "They are going to plant the 'trees of liberty,' * and we shall all eat of

* Poles crowned with Phrygian caps.

those good apples of Paradise. . . . Oh, Sainte-Marianne, I never thought to live to see it again! Frédéric, my boy, become a Republican."

I remarked on the fine ring she wore.

"Ha, yes, it is a fine ring," she rejoined. "Fancy—I have not worn it since the day Bonaparte quitted this country for the island of Elba! A friend gave me this ring in the days—ah, what days those were—when we all danced the 'Carmagnole.'"

So saying she raised her skirt, and, making a step or two of the old dance, entered her cottage chuckling softly at the recollection of those bygone days.

But when I recounted the incident to my father his recollections were of a graver kind.

"I also saw the Republic," he said, "and it is to be hoped the atrocious things which took place then will never be repeated. They killed the King Louis XVI., and the beautiful Queen, his wife, besides princesses, priests, and numberless good people of all sorts. Then foreign kings combined and made war upon France. In order to defend the Republic, there was a general conscription. All were called out, the lame, the blind, the halt—not a man but had to enlist. I remember how we met a regiment of Allobrogians on their way to Toulon. One of them seized my young brother,

and placing his naked sword across the boy's neck —he was but twelve years old—commanded him to cry out 'Long live the Republic,' or he would finish him off. The boy did as he was told, but the fright killed him. The nobles and the good priests, all were suspected, and those who could emigrate did so, in order to escape the guillotine. The Abbé Riousset, disguised as a shepherd, made his way to Piedmont with the flocks of Monsieur de Lubières. We managed to save Monsieur Victorin Cartier, whose lands we farmed. For three months we hid him in a cave we dug out under the wine-casks, and whenever the municipal officers or the police of the district came down upon us to count the lambs we had in the fold, and the loaves of bread in the pans, in accordance with the law, my poor mother would hasten to fry a big omelette at the stove.

"When once they had eaten and drunk their fill, they would forget, or pretend to do so, to take further perquisites, and off they would go, carrying great branches of laurel with which to greet the victorious armies of the Republic. The châteaux were pillaged, the very dove-cotes demolished, the bells melted down, and the crosses broken. In the churces they piled up great mounds of earth on which they planted pine-trees, oaks and

junipers. The church at Maillane was turned into a club, and if you refused to go to their meetings you were at once denounced and notified as 'suspect.' Our priest, who happened unfortunately to be a coward and a traitor, announced one day from the pulpit that all he had hitherto preached was a lie. He roused such indignation that, had not every man lived in fear of his neighbour, they would have stoned him. It was this same priest who another time wound up his discourse with the injunction that any one who knew of or aided in hiding a 'suspect,' would be held guilty of mortal sin unless he denounced such a one at once to the Commune. Finally, they ended by abolishing all observance of Sundays and feast-days, and instead, every tenth day, in great pomp they adored the Goddess of Reason —and would you know who was the goddess at Maillane? Why, none other than the old dame Riquelle!"

We all exclaimed in surprise.

"Riquelle," continued my father, "was at that time eighteen years old. A handsome, well-grown girl, one of the most admired in all the country. I was about the same age. Her father was Mayor of Maillane and by trade a shoemaker—he made me a pair of shoes I remember wearing when I

joined the army. Well, imagine it—I saw this same Riquelle in the garments, or rather the lack of garments, of a heathen goddess, a red cap on her head, seated on the altar of the church."

All this my father recounted at supper one evening about the year 1848.

Some eleven years after, I, finding myself in Paris just after the publication of *Mireille*, was dining at the house of the hospitable banker Milland, he who delighted to assemble every week at his board a gathering of artists, savants, and men of letters. We were about fifty, and I had the honour of sitting on one side of our charming hostess, while Méry was on the other. Towards the end of dinner an old man very simply attired addressed me in Provençal from the further end of the table, inquiring if I came from Maillane. It was the father of my host, and I rose and sat down beside him.

"Do you happen to know the daughter of the once famous Mayor of Maillane, Jacques Riquelle?" he inquired.

"Riquelle the goddess? Aye, indeed," I answered; "we are right good friends."

"Well, fifty years ago," said the old man, "when I went to Maillane to sell horses and mules——"

"You gave her a topaz ring!" I cried with a sudden inspiration.

The old fellow shook his sides with laughter and answered, delighted: "What, she told you about that? Ah, my dear sir——"

But at this moment we were interrupted by the banker, who, in accordance with his custom, after every meal came to pay his respects to his worthy father, whereupon the latter, placing his hands patriarchal fashion on his son's head, bestowed on him his benediction.

But to return to my own story. In spite of the views held by my family, this outburst of liberty and enterprise, which breaks down the old fences when a revolution is rife, had found me already aflame and eager to follow the onrush. At the first proclamation signed with the illustrious name of Lamartine my muse awoke and burst forth into fiery song, which the local papers of Arles and Avignon hastened to publish:

Réveillez-vous enfants de la Gironde,
Et tressaillez dans vos sepulcres froids;
La liberté va rajeunir le monde . . .
Guerre éternelle entre nous et les rois.

A mad enthusiasm seized me for all humanitarian and liberal ideas; and my Republicanism, while it scandalised the Royalists of Maillane, who

regarded me as a turncoat, delighted the Republicans, who, being in the minority, were enchanted at getting me to join them in shouting the "Marseillaise."

And here, in Provence, as elsewhere, all this brought in its train broils and internal divisions. The Reds proclaimed their sentiments by wearing a belt and scarf of scarlet, while the Whites wore green. The former carried a buttonhole of thyme, emblem of the mountain, and the latter a sprig of the royal lily. The Republicans planted the "trees of liberty" at every corner, and by night the Royalists kicked them down. Thereupon followed riots and knife-thrusts; till before long this good people, these Provenceaux of the same race, who a month before had been living in brotherly love and good fellowship, were all ready to make mincemeat of one another for a party wrangle that led to nothing.

All students of the same year took sides and split into rival parties, neither of which ever lost an opportunity of a skirmish. Every evening we Reds, after washing down our omelettes with plenty of good wine, issued from the inn according to the correct village fashion, in shirt sleeves, with a napkin round our necks. Down the street we went to the sound of the tambour, dancing the

"Carmagnole" and singing at the pitch of our voices the latest song in vogue.

We finished the evening usually by keeping high carnival, and yelling "Long live Marianne," * as we waved high our red belts.

One fine day, as I appeared in the morning, none too early, after an evening of this kind, I found my father awaiting me. "Come this way, Frédéric," he said in his most serious and impressive manner, "I wish to speak to you."

"You are in for it this time, Frédéric," thought I to myself; "now all the fat is in the fire!" Following him in silence, he led the way to a quiet spot at the back of the farm, where he made me sit down on the bank by his side.

"What is this they tell me?" he began. "That you, my son, have joined these young scamps who go about yelling 'Long live Marianne'—that you dance the 'Carmagnole,' waving your red sash? Ah, Frédéric, you are young—know you it was with that dance and those same cries the Revolutionists set up the scaffold? Not content with having published in all the papers a song in which you pour contempt on all kings—— But what harm have they done you, may I ask, these unfortunate kings?"

* Signifying the Republic.

I must confess I found this question somewhat difficult to answer, and my sire continued:

"Monsieur Durand-Maillane, a learned man, since he it was who presided at the famous Convention, and wise as he was learned, refused to sign the death warrant of the King, and speaking one day to his nephew Pélissier, also member of the Convention, he warned him: 'Pélissier,' said he, 'thou art young and thou wilt surely see the day when the people will have to pay with many thousands of heads for this death of their King.' A prophecy which was verified only too fully by twenty years of ruthless war."

"But," I protested, "this Republic desires harm to no man. They have just abolished capital punishment for political offenders. Some of the first names in France figure in the provisionary Government—the astronomer Arago, the great poet Lamartine; our 'trees of liberty' * are blessed by the priests themselves. And, let me ask you, my father," I insisted, "is it not a fact that before 1789 the aristocrats oppressed the people somewhat beyond endurance?"

"Well," conceded my worthy sire, "I will not deny there were abuses, great abuses—I can cite you an example. One day—I must have been about

* Poles crowned with Phrygian caps.

fourteen years old—I was coming from Saint-Rémy with a waggon of straw trusses. The mistral blew with such force I failed to hear a voice behind calling to me to make way for a carriage to pass. The owner, who was a priest of the nobility, Monsieur de Verclos, managed at last to pass me, and as he did so gave me a lash with his whip across the face, which covered me with blood. There were some peasants pasturing close by, and their indignation was such at this action that they fell upon the man of God, in spite of his Order being at that time held sacred, and beat him without mercy. Ah, undoubtedly," reflected my father, "there were some bad specimens among them, and the Revolution just at first attracted a good many of us. But gradually everything went wrong and as usual the good paid for the bad."

And so with the Revolution of 1848; all at first appeared to be on good and straight lines. We Provenceaux were represented in the National Assembly by such first-class men as Berryer, Lamartine, Lamennais, Béranger, Lacordaire, Garnier-Pagès, Marie, and a poet of the people named Astouin. But the party-spirited reactionaries soon poisoned everything; the butcheries and massacres of June horrified the nation. The

moderates grew cold, the extremists became venomous, and all my fair young visions of a platonic Republic were overcast with gloomy doubt. Happily light from another quarter shed its beams on my soul. Nature, revealing herself in the grand order, space and peace of the rustic life, opened her arms to me; it was the triumph of Ceres.

In the present day, when machinery has almost obliterated agriculture, the cultivation of the soil is losing more and more the noble aspect of that sacred art and of its idyllic character. Now at harvest time the plains are covered with a kind of monster spider and gigantic crab, which scratch up the ground with their claws, and cut down the grain with cutlasses, and bind the sheaves with wire; then follow other monsters snorting steam, a sort of Tarascon dragon who seizes on the fallen wheat, cuts the straw, sifts the grain, and shakes out the ears of corn. All this is done in latest American style, a dull matter of business, with never a song to make toil a gladness, amid a whirl of noise, dust, and hideous smoke, and the constant dread, if you are not constantly on the watch, that the monster will snap off one of your limbs. This is Progress, the fatal Reaper, against whom it is useless to contend, bitter result of science,

that tree of knowledge whose fruit is both good and evil.

But at the time of which I write, the old methods were still in use, with all the picturesque apparatus of classic times.

So soon as the corn took on a shade of apricot, throughout the Commune of Arles, a messenger went the round of the mountain villages blowing his horn and crying : " This is to give notice that the corn in Arles is ripening."

Thereupon the mountaineers, in groups of threes and fours, with their wives and daughters, their donkeys and mules, made ready to descend to the plains for harvesting. A couple of harvesters, together with a boy or young girl to stack the sheaves, made up a *solque*, and the men hired themselves out in gangs of so many *solques*, who undertook the field by contract. At the head of the group walked the chief, making a pathway through the corn, while another, called the bailiff, organised and directed the work.

As in the days of Cincinnatus, Cato and Virgil, we reaped with the sickle, the fingers of the right hand protected by a shield of twisted reeds or rushes.

At Arles, about the time of Saint John's Day, thousands of these harvest labourers might be seen

assembled in the Place des Hommes, their scythes slung on their backs, standing and lying about while waiting to be hired.

In the mountain districts a man who had never done his harvesting in the plains of Arles found it hard, so they said, to get any girl to marry him, and it was on this custom Félix Gras founded the story of his epic poem "Les Charbonniers."

On our own farm we hired from seven to eight of these groups every year at harvest-time. It was a fine upset throughout the house when these folk arrived. All sorts of special utensils were unearthed for the occasion, barrels made of willow wood, enormous earthenware pans, big pots and jugs for wine, a whole battery of the rough pottery made at Apt. It was a time of constant feasting and gaiety, above all when we lit the bonfires on Saint John's Day and danced round them singing the harvest songs.

Every day at dawn the reapers ranged themselves in line, and so soon as the chief had opened out a pathway through the cornfield all glistening with morning dew, they swung their blades, and as they slowly advanced down fell the golden corn. The sheaf-binders, most of whom were young girls in the freshness of their youthful bloom, followed after, bending low over the fallen grain, laughing

and jesting with a gaiety it rejoiced one's heart to see. Then as the sun appeared bathing the sky all rosy red and sending forth a glory of golden rays, the chief, raising high in the air his scythe, would cry, "Hail to the new day," and all the scythes would follow suit. Having thus saluted the newly risen sun, again they fell to work, the cornfield bowing down as they advanced with rhythmic harmonious movement of their bare arms. From time to time the bailiff cried out, mustering his troop for another turn. At last, after four hours' vigorous work, the chief would give the word for all to rest. Whereupon, after washing the handles of their scythes in the nearest stream, they would sit down on the sheaves in the middle of the stubble, and take their first repast.

It was my work, with the aid of Babache, our old mule, to take round the provisions in rope baskets.

The harvesters had five meals a day, beginning with the breakfast at seven o'clock, which consisted of anchovies spread on bread steeped in oil and vinegar, together with raw onions, an invariable accompaniment. At ten o'clock they had the "big drink," as it was called, with hard-boiled eggs and cheese; at one o'clock dinner, soup and vegetables; at four a large salad, with

which were eaten crusts rubbed with garlic ; and finally the supper, consisting either of pork or mutton and sometimes an omelette strongly flavoured with onion, a favourite harvesting dish. In the field they drank by turns from a barrel taken round by the chief and swung on a pole, which he balanced on the shoulder of the one drinking. For their meals in the field they had one plate between three, each one helping himself with a big wooden spoon.

When the reapers' work was done, came the gleaners to gather the stray ears left among the stubble. Troops of these women went the rounds of the farms, sleeping at night under small tents, which served to protect them from the mosquito. A third of their gleanings, according to the usage in the country of Arles, went always to the hospital.

Such were the people, fine children of the soil, who were not only my models but my teachers in the art of poetry. It was in this company, the grand sun of Provence streaming down on me as I lay full length beneath a willow-tree, that I learnt to pipe and sing such songs as " Les Moissons " and others in " Les Iles d'Or."

CHAPTER X

MADEMOISELLE LOUISE

THAT year, my parents, seeing me gaping idly at the moon, sent me to Aix to study law, for these good souls were wise enough to know that my bachelor's degree was but an insufficient guarantee either of wisdom or of science. But before my departure for the Sextine city I met with an adventure which both interested and touched me.

In a neighbouring farmhouse, a family from the town had settled, and going to church we sometimes met the daughters. Towards the end of summer, they, with their mother, came to call, and my mother appropriately offered them curds ; for we had on our farm fine herds of cattle, and milk in abundance. My mother herself superintended the dairy, making not only the curds but the cream cheeses, those small cheeses of the country of Arles, so much appreciated by Beland de la Belaudière, the Provençal poet in the time of the Valois kings :

A la ville des Baux, pour un florin vaillant
Vous avez un tablier plein de fromages
Qui fond au gosier comme sucre fin.*

Like the shepherdesses sung by Virgil, each day my mother, carrying on her hip the earthenware pot and skimmer, descended to the dairy and filled up the various moulds with the fine flaking curds from her pot. The cheeses made, she left them to drain upon the osiers, which I myself delighted to cut for her down by the stream.

So on this occasion we partook with these young girls of a bowl of curds. One of them, about my own age, with a face which recalled those Greek profiles sculptured on the ancient monuments in the plains of Saint-Rémy, regarded me tenderly with her great dark eyes. Her name was Louise.

We visited the peacocks, with their rainbow-hued tails outspread, the bees in their long row of sheltered hives, the bleating lambs in the fold, the well with its pent-roof supported by pillars of stone — everything, in fact, which could interest them. Louise seemed to move in a dream of delight.

When we were in the garden, while my mother

* In the city of the Baux for a florin's value
You have an apron full of cheeses
Which melt in the mouth like fine sugar.

chatted with hers, and gathered pears for our guests, Louise and I sat down together on the parapet of the old well.

"I want to tell you something," began Mademoiselle Louise. "Do you remember a little frock, a muslin frock that your mother took to you one day when you were at school at St. Michel de Frigolet?"

"Yes—to act my part in the piece called *Les Enfants d'Edouard*."

"Well then—that dress, monsieur, was mine."

"But did they not return it to you?" I asked like an imbecile.

"Oh yes," she said, a little confused, "I only spoke of it as—one might of anything."

Then her mother called her.

Louise gave me her hand; such a cold hand, and since the hour was late they went home.

A week later, towards sunset, Mademoiselle Louise appeared again at our door, this time accompanied only by a friend.

"Good afternoon," said she. "We have come to buy some of those juicy pears you gave us the other day from your garden."

My mother invited them to be seated, but Louise declined, saying it was too late, and I accompanied them to gather the pears.

Louise's friend, Courrade by name, was from Saint-Rémy, a handsome girl, with thick brown hair encircled by her Arlesienne ribbon ; charming as Louise was, she acted imprudently in bringing such a friend.

Arrived in the orchard, while I lowered the branches, Courrade, raising her pretty round arms, bare to the elbow, set to work and picked the pears. Louise, looking very pale, encouraged her, and bade her choose the most ripe. My heart was already stirred, though by which of the girls I could not say, when Louise, as if she had something to communicate, drew me to one side, and we sauntered slowly towards the group of cypresses, where, side by side, we sat down on a stone bench, I somewhat embarrassed, she regarding me with emotion.

" Frédéric," she began, " the other day I spoke to you of a frock which at the age of eleven I lent you to wear in the play at St. Michel de Frigolet. . . . You have read the story of Déjanire and Hercules ? "

" Yes," I answered laughing, " and also of the tunic which the beautiful Déjanire gave to poor Hercules, and which set his blood on fire."

" Ah ! " said the young girl, " in this case it is just the reverse, for that little white muslin dress

which you had touched—which you had worn—from the moment I put it on once more, I loved you. Do not be angry with me for this confession, which I know must appear strange, even mad, in your eyes. Ah, do not be angry," she begged, weeping, " for this divine fire, conveyed to me by the fatal dress, and which from that time has never ceased to consume me, I have hidden deep within my heart, oh, Frédéric, for seven long years ! "

I took her little feverish hand in mine, and would have replied by folding her in my arms ; but gently she pushed me from her :

" No, Frédéric," she said, " as yet we cannot say whether the poem of which I have sung the first stanza will ever go further. . . . I must now leave you. Think on what I have said, and remember that since I am one of those who cannot change, whatever your answer may be, my heart is given to you for ever."

So saying she rose, and running up to her friend Courrade, called to her to bring the pears that they might weigh and pay for them.

We returned to the house, and having settled for the pears they left. My feelings were difficult to analyse. I found myself both charmed and disturbed by this sudden appearance of young maidens upon the scene, both of whom in a certain

fashion appealed strongly to me. Long I strolled among the trees, watching the sun's rays grow slanting and the doves fly home to roost, and in spite of a feeling of exhilaration, and even happiness, on sounding myself I perceived that I was in a rare fix.

The " Disciple of Venus " says truly, " Love will not brook command." This heroic young maid, armed with nought but her grace and her virginity, was she not justified in thinking to come off victorious ? Charming as she was, and herself charmed by her long dream of love, no wonder if she thought that in the words of Dante, " Love that has no lover pardons love," and that a young man living as I was an isolated country life, would respond with emotion at the first cooing note. She did not realise that love, being the gift and abandonment of all one's being, no sooner does the soul feel itself pursued with the object of capture, than it flies off like the bird to whom the charmer calls in vain.

So it was that in presence of this chain of flowers, this rose, who unfolded all her sweetness for me, I coiled up with reserve, whereas towards the other, who, in her capacity of devoted friend and confidante, seemed to avoid my approach and my glance, I felt myself irresistibly drawn. For

at that age I must confess to having already formed very definite ideas on the subject of love and the beloved. One day, either in the near or the far future, I told myself, I should meet her, my fate, in that same land of Arles, a superb country maiden, wearing the Arlesian costume like a queen, galloping on her steed across the plains of the Crau, a trident in her hand; after a long and ardent wooing, one fine day my song of love would win her, and in triumph I should conduct her to our farm, where, like my mother before her, she should reign over her pastoral subjects. Already as I look back, I see that I dreamt of my "Mireille," and this ideal of blooming beauty already conceived by me, though only in the silence and secrecy of my heart, told greatly against the chances of poor Mademoiselle Louise, who, according to the standard of my vision, was far too much of a young lady.

After this we started a correspondence, or rather an interchange of love on one side and friendship on the other, which lasted over a period of some three years or more—all the time I was at Aix in fact. On my side I endeavoured gallantly to humour her sentiment for myself, so that, little by little if I could, I might change it to a feeling less embarrassing for both of us. But Louise, in spite

of this, grew ever more and more fixed in her infatuation, winging to me one missive after another of despairing farewell. The following was the last of these letters :

" I have loved but once, and I shall die, I vow to you, with the name of Frédéric engraven on my heart. Ah ! the sleepless nights I have passed thinking of my hapless fate ! And yesterday, reading over your vain attempts at consolation, the effort to keep back my weeping almost made my heart break. The doctor announced that I had fever, a nervous breakdown, and prescribed rest. How I rejoiced to think I was indeed seriously ill ! I felt even happy at the thought of dying and awaiting you in that other world where your letter declares we shall surely meet. . . . But hear me, Frédéric, I beseech you, since it is indeed true that before long you will hear I have quitted this world, shed I beg, one tear of regret for me. Two years ago I made you a promise : it was to pray God every day to give you happiness —perfect happiness ; never have I failed to offer up that prayer, and I shall never fail while life lasts. On your side, I beseech you, therefore, do not forget me, Frédéric ; but when you see beneath your feet the withered yellow leaves, let them

remind you of my young life withered by tears, dried up by grief, and when you pass by a brooklet, listen to its gentle murmur, and hear in that plaintive sound the echo of my love, and when some little bird brushes you with its soft wing, let that tiny messenger say to you that I am ever near you. Forget not your poor Louise, oh, Frédéric, I pray you."

This was the final adieu sent to me by the poor young girl, sealed with her own blood and accompanied by a medallion of the Holy Virgin, covered with her kisses, and encased in a small velvet cover on which she had embroidered my initials with her chestnut hair, encircled by a wreath of ivy, and the words, " Behold in me the strand of ivy, ever my love embraces thee."

Poor dear Louise ! Not long after this she took the veil and became a nun, and in a few years died. Even now it moves me to melancholy when I think of her young life withered before its bloom by this ill-starred love. To her memory I dedicate this little record, and offer it to her *Manes* hovering perhaps still around me.

The town of Aix (Head of Justice was the old significance), where I betook myself to make my

law studies, by reason of its honourable past as capital of Provence and parliamentary city, possessed an air of soberness and dignity somewhat in contradiction with the Provençal atmosphere. The stately air given by the shady trees of the beautiful public drive, the fountains, monuments and palaces of bygone days, together with the numerous black-robed magistrates, lawyers and professors to be seen in the streets, all contributed towards the severe and rather cold aspect which characterised this city.

In my time, however, this impression was but a surface one, and among the students there was a gaiety of race, an intimate good-fellowship, quite in keeping with the traditions left by the good King René of old.

I remember even worthy counsellors and judges of the Court who, when at home, either in town or country house, amused themselves and their friends playing the tambourine ;* while grave and learned doctors, such as d'Astros, brother of the Cardinal of that name, delivered at the Academy lectures in the simple and joyous tongue of their native Provençal. One of the best methods this for keeping alive the national soul, and which in Aix has never lapsed. Count Portalis, for example,

* The national instrument of Provence.

one of the grand jurists of the Napoleon Code, wrote a play in Provençal. Then there was Monsieur Diouloufet, famous librarian of the French Athens * (as Aix once called herself), who, in the reign of Louis XVIII., sang in the language of Provence his poems of "Les Magnans"; while Monsieur Mignet, the illustrious historian and academician, came every year to Aix on purpose to play bowls, the national game of his youth, his panacea for restoring and renovating all men being "to drink in the sunshine of Provence, speak the language of Provence, eat a *ragoût* of Provence, and every morning play a game of bowls."

I had been in Aix a few months when, walking one afternoon near the Hot Springs, to my joy I suddenly caught sight of the profile, and quite unmistakable nose, of my friend Anselme Mathieu of Châteauneuf.

In his usual casual way he greeted me. "This water is really hot—it is not pretence my dear fellow, it positively smokes."

"When did you arrive?" I asked him with a hearty grip of the hand. "And what good wind blew you here?"

"The night before last," said he. "Faith, I

* Athène du Midi.

said to myself, since Mistral is off to Aix to read for law, I had better do likewise."

I congratulated him on the happy inspiration, and inquired whether he had taken his bachelor's degree, without which it was useless to think of being admitted to the Law Faculty.

"Oh yes," he laughed. "I passed out with the wooden spoon! But if they refuse me a diploma in the courts of law, no man can prevent my taking one in the courts of love! Why, only to-day," he continued, "I made the acquaintance of a charming young laundress, a little sunburnt it is true, but with lips like a cherry, teeth like a puppy, unruly curls peeping from out her white cap, a bare throat, little turned-up nose, dimpled arms——"

"Hold, villain," I remonstrated, "it strikes me your eyes were not idle."

"Frédéric, you are on a wrong scent," he answered solemnly. "Think not that I, a scion of the noble house of Montredon, irresponsible though I may be, would lose my heart to a little chit of a laundress—but, I don't know if you share this feeling, I find it impossible to pass a pretty face without turning round to gaze at it. In short, after a little conversation with the girl, we arranged that she should

wash for me and come to fetch my things next week!"

I upbraided him for an unscrupulous scoundrel, but he interrupted me again, saying I had not yet grasped the situation, and begging me to listen to the end of his tale.

"While chatting with my little friend," he continued, "I noticed she was rubbing away at a dainty chemise of finest linen, trimmed with lace. It excited my curiosity and admiration—I inquired to whom it belonged? 'This chemise,' the young girl answered, 'belongs to one of the most beautiful ladies in Aix—a *baronne* of some thirty summers, married, poor thing, to an old curmudgeon who is a judge of the Courts and jealous as a Turk.' 'She must be bored to death,' I cried. 'Ah yes,' she replied, 'she is bored to death, poor lady. There she sits on her balcony waiting, one would say, for some gallant gentleman who shall come to the rescue.' I inquired her name, but here she demurred, saying she was but the laundress, and had no right to mix herself up in affairs that did not concern her. Not a word more could I get out of her; but," added Mathieu hopefully, "when she comes for my washing next week, it is a pity if I don't make her open her lips by bestowing two or three good kisses upon them."

"And when you know the name of the lady, what then?" I asked.

"What then? Why, my dear fellow, I have bread in the cupboard for three years! While you other poor devils are grinding away at your law studies, I, like the troubadours of old Provence, shall at my leisure study beneath my lady's balcony the gentle art of the laws of love."

And this was, in effect, precisely the task undertaken and accomplished by the Chevalier Mathieu during the three following years at Aix.

Ah, the good days we spent in excursions all over the country! Now a picnic by the Bridge of Arc, in a dell just off the dusty high road to Marseilles, or a party to Tholonet to sniff up the fine fumes of the wine of Langesse. Another time it was a students' duel in the valley of Infernets, the pistols charged with pellets of mud; or again a merry company on the diligence to Toulon, through the lovely woods of Cuge and across the Gorge of Ollioules. The students of Aix had led much the same life since the good old days of the Popes of Avignon and the time of Queen Joan.

While we were thus amusing ourselves in the noble city of the Counts of Provence, Roumanille, more wise and staid, was publishing at Avignon,

in the periodical called the *Commune*, admirable dialogues, full of wisdom, good sense and courage, as, for example, "Le Thym," "Un Rouge et un Blanc," "Les Prêtres," work which both popularised and dignified the Provençal tongue. From this he proceeded, on the strength of the reputation won by his "Pâquerettes" and his daring pamphlets, to convoke, through the means of his journal, all Provençal singers of the day, old and young. The outcome of this rallying movement was a publication in 1852, *Les Provençales*, presented to the public with an introduction of ardent enthusiasm by the learned and eminent savant, Monsieur Saint-René Taillandier, then residing at Montpellier.

In this first venture appeared contributions from d'Astros and Gaut of Aix; Aubert, Bellot, Bénédit, Bourelly, and Barthélemy of Marseilles; Bondin, Cassan, Giéra of Avignon; Tarascon was represented by Gautier, and Beaucaire by Bonnet; Châteauneuf by Anselme Mathieu; Carpentras by Reybaud and Dupuy; Cavaillon by Castil-Blaze, then there was Garcin, warm-hearted son of that Marshal d'Alliens mentioned in *Mireille*; and Crousillat of Salon, besides a group of Languedoc poets—Moquin-Tandon, Peyrottes, Lafare-Alois; and Jasmin, who contributed one poem.

The principal contributor, however, was Roumanille, then in full flower of production, his last work, entitled "Les Crèches," having elicited from the great Sainte-Beuve the declaration that it was worthy of Klopstock.

Théodore Aubanel, then in his twenty-second year, began to send forth his first master-strokes, "Le 9 Thermidor," "Les Faucheurs," "A la Toussaint." And finally, I also, aflame with the fine ardour of patriotism, sent in my ten short pieces, among which were "Amertume," "Le Mistral," "Une Course de Taureaux," and a "Bonjour à Tous," which last notified our new start.

But to return to the gay Mathieu and his love adventure with the lady of Aix, the conclusion of which I left untold.

Whenever I came across this student in the laws of love, I inquired without fail of his progress.

His patience and perseverance, he announced to me one day, had been rewarded, and Lélette, the little laundress, at last consented to show him the house of the fair *baronne*. Beneath her balcony he had from that time paced to and fro, unwearyingly, until finally observed by the object of his adoration—a lady, declared Mathieu, of matchless

beauty—and the sequel proved of good taste also, since the other evening, smiling charmingly upon her devoted cavalier, she had let fall from the heaven above him—a flower.

Thereupon Mathieu produced a faded carnation in proof of his tale, and gazing with tender rapture, blew a kiss skywards.

After this, several months elapsed, without my catching a sight of Mathieu. I resolved to go and look him up.

Mounting to his attic, I found my friend reclining with one foot on a chair.

Bidding me a hearty welcome, he poured forth his latest news and the history of his accident.

"Imagine, my dear fellow—I had hit upon a plan for a nocturnal visit to my divine lady. Everything was arranged—Lélette, my little laundress, lent us a hand. I entered the garden at eleven o'clock, and by the trellis of the rose-tree which creeps to her window, I climbed up. You may imagine how my heart beat! For she, my sovereign lady, had promised to stretch out her dainty hand that I might press thereon my kisses. Heavens!—the shutters opened softly—and a hand, my Frédéric, a hand I quickly recognised was not that of my adored, shook down on my upturned nose—the cinders of a pipe! I waited

for no more, but sliding to the ground, I fled. I leapt the garden wall, and, confound it—sprained my foot ! "

He laughed, and I joined him till we nearly dislocated our jaws. I inquired if he had sent for a doctor ? That office he informed me had been undertaken by the mother of Lélette—a worthy dame who kept a tavern near the Porte d'Italie. This old body, being a sorceress in her way, had steeped the sprained foot in white wine, muttering weird incantations the while, and, after bandaging the foot tightly, concluded the ceremony by making the sign of the cross three times with her great toe.

" So here I am," said Mathieu, " waiting till Providence sees fit to heal me . . . and reading meanwhile the ' Pâquerettes ' of our friend Roumanille. The time does not hang heavy, for little Lélette brings me my simple fare twice a day, and in default of ortolans I am thankful for sparrows."

Whether Mathieu, well named, as he afterwards was, the " Félibre of the Kisses," drew on his gorgeous imagination for the whole of this romantic episode, I cannot pretend to say ; enough that I repeat it as he told it to me.

CHAPTER XI

THE RETURN TO THE FARM

I HAD now become a full-blown lawyer, like scores of others, and, as you may have remarked, I did not overwork myself! Proud as a young bird that has found a worm, I returned home, arriving just at the hour of supper, which was being served on the stone table in the open, under the vine trellis, by the last rays of the setting sun.

"Good evening, everybody!" I cried.

"God bless you, Frédéric."

"Father, mother, it is all right!" I announced, "and I have really finished this time!"

"Well, that is a good job!" cried Madeleine, the young Piedmontaise, who served at table.

Then, still standing, and before all the labourers, I gave an account of my last undertaking. As I finished, my venerable father remarked:

"Well, my boy, I have now done my duty by you. You have had much more schooling than I ever had. It is now for you to choose the road that suits you—I leave you free."

"Hearty thanks, my father," I answered,

And then and there—at that time I was one and twenty—with my foot on the threshold of the paternal home, and my eyes looking towards the Alpilles, I formed the resolution, first, to raise and revivify in Provence the sentiment of race that I saw being annihilated by the false and unnatural education of all the schools; secondly, to promote that resurrection by the restoration of the native and historic language of the country, against which the schools waged war to the death; and lastly, to make that language popular by illuminating it with the divine flame of poetry.

All these ideas hummed vaguely in my soul. This eddying and surging of the Provençal sap filled my being, and, free from all conventional literary influences, strong in the independence which gave me wings, and assured that nothing could now deter me, the sight of the labourers one evening, singing as they followed the plough in the furrow, inspired me with the opening song of *Mireille*.

This poem, the child of love, was peaceably and leisurely brought to birth under the influence of the warm golden sunshine and the breath of the wide sweeping winds of Provence. At the same time I took over the charge of the farm, under the direction of my father, who, at eighty years of

age, had become blind. It was a life well suited to me, and this was all I cared for—to be happy in my home and with certain chosen friends. We were indifferent to Paris in those days of innocence. My highest ambition was that Arles, which rose ever on my horizon as did Mantua on that of Virgil, should one day recognise my poetry as her own.

Thus, thinking only of the country people of the Crau and the Camargue, I could truly say in *Mireille* :

" We sing but for you, shepherds and people of the farms."

I had no definite plan in commencing *Mireille*, except the broad lines of a love-story between two beautiful children of Provence, both with the temperament of their country though of different ranks in life, and to let the ball roll in the unpremeditated way that happens in real life, apparently at the pleasure of the winds.

Mireille, the happy name which breathes its own poetry, was destined to be that of my heroine, for I had heard it in our home from my cradle, though nowhere else.

When old Nanon, my maternal grandmother, wished to compliment one of her daughters she would say :

"That is Mireille, the beautiful Mireille of my heart!"

And my mother in fun would say sometimes of a young girl:

"There, do you see her? That is the Mireille of my heart."

But when I questioned concerning Mireille, no one could tell me anything; hers was a lost history of which nothing remained but the name of the heroine, and a gleam of beauty lost in a mist of love. It was enough, however, to bring good fortune to a poem, which perhaps—who can tell?—was the reconstruction of a true romance, revealed through the intuition granted to the poet.

The Judge's Farm was at this time the best of all soils for the growth of idyllic poetry. Was not this epic of Provence, with its background of blue and its frame of the Alpilles, living and singing around me? Did I not see Mireille passing, not only in my dreams of a young man, but also in actual person? Now in the sweet village maidens who came to gather mulberry leaves for the silk-worms, now in the charming white-coifed hay-makers, gleaners and reapers who came and went through the corn, the hay, the olives and the vines.

And the actors of my drama, my labourers, harvesters, cowherds and shepherds, did they not

gladden my eyes from early morn till eve ? Could one possibly find a grander prototype for my Master Ramon than the patriarch François Mistral, he whom all the world, even my mother, called " The Master " ? My dear father ! Sometimes, when the work was pressing and help was needed, either for the hay or to draw water from the well, he would call out, " Where is Frédéric ? " Perhaps at that moment I had crept away under a sheltering willow in pursuit of some flying rhyme, and my poor mother would answer :

" He is writing."

And at once the stern voice of the good man would soften as he said :

" Then do not disturb him."

For, having himself read nothing but the Scriptures and " Don Quixote," writing in his eyes appeared a sort of religious exercise.

This respect of the unlettered for the mystery of the pen is very well shown in the opening of one of our popular legends :

> Monseigneur Saint-Anselme was learned and wise,
> One day, by his writing, he rose to the skies, &c.

Another person who, without knowing it, influenced my epic muse was our old cousin Tourette, from the village of Mouriès; a sort of

colossus, strong of limb but lame, with great leather gaiters over his boots; he was known in all that part as "The Major," having, in 1815, served as drum-major in the National Guards, under the command of the Duc d'Angoulême, he who wished to arrest Napoleon on his return from the Isle of Elba. "The Major" had, in his youth, dissipated his fortune by gambling, and in his old age, reduced to poverty, he came, every winter, to pass some time with us at the farm. On his departure, my father always saw that he took with him some bushels of corn. During the summer time he travelled over the Crau and the Camargue, now helping the shepherds to shear the sheep, now the mowers of the marshes to bind the rushes, or the salters to collect and heap up the salt. Certainly no one could equal him in knowledge of the country of Arles and its work. He knew the names of every farm, and every pasture, of the head shepherds, and of each stud of horses or of wild bulls. And he talked of it all with an eloquence, a picturesqueness, a richness of Provençal expression which it was a pleasure to hear. Describing, for instance, the Comte de Mailly as very rich in house property, he would say: "He possesses seven acres of roofing."

The girls who were engaged for the olive gather-

ing at Mouriès would hire him to tell them stories in the evenings. They gave him, I think, each one, a halfpenny for the evening. He kept them in fits of laughter, for he knew all the stories, more or less humorous, that from one to another were transmitted among the people, such as "Jean de la Vache," "Jean de la Mule," "Jean de l'Ours," "Le Doreur," &c.

Directly the snow began to fall we knew "The Major" would soon make his appearance. And he never failed.

"Good-day, cousin."

"Cousin, good-day."

And there he was. His hand shaken and his stick deposited, unobtrusively he took up his accustomed seat in his corner, and, while eating a good slice of bread and butter and cheese, he would give us the news.

Cousin Tourette being, like most dreamers, a bit of an idler, had all his life dreamt of a remunerative post where there would be very little work.

"I should like," he told us, "the situation of reckoner of cod-fish. At Marseilles, for instance, in one of those big shops where they unload, a man can, while seated, earn, so I am told, by counting the fish in dozens, his twelve hundred francs a year!"

Poor old Major! He died, like many another, without having realised his cod-fish dream.

I can never forget either, among those who helped me to make the poetry of *Mireille*, the woodcutter Siboul, a fine fellow from Montfrin, in a suit of velvet, who came every year towards the end of the autumn with his great billhook to trim our undergrowth of willow. While he worked away busily, what shrewd observations he would make to me about the Rhône, its currents, eddies, lagoons and bays, the soil and the islands! Also about the animals that frequented the dikes, the otters that lodged in the hollow trees, the beavers who work as deftly as woodcutters, the birds who suspend their nests from the white poplars, besides endless stories of the osier-cutters and basket-makers of Vallabrèque and that district.

My chief instructor, however, in the botany of Provence was our neighbour Xavier, a peasant herbalist, who told me the Provençal names and virtues of all the simples and herbs of Saint-Jean and of Saint-Roch. And thus I collected such a good store of botanical knowledge that, without wishing to speak slightingly of the learned professors of our schools, either high or low, I believe those gentlemen would have found it difficult to

pass the examination I could, for instance, on the subject of thistles.

Suddenly, like a bomb, during this quiet, growing time of my *Mireille*, burst the news of the Revolution of December 2, 1851.

I had never been one of those fanatics to whom the Republic meant religion, country, justice—everything; and the Jacobites, by their intolerance, their mania for levelling, their hardness, brutality and materialism, had disgusted and wounded me more than once, and now the action of the Government in uprooting the very law to which they had sworn fidelity, filled me with indignation, and dissipated once and for all any illusions about those future federations which I had once hoped would be the outcome of a Republic of France.

Some of my colleagues from the Law School placed themselves at the head of the insurgent bands who were raised in Le Var in the name of the Constitution; but the greater number, in Provence as elsewhere, some disgusted by the turbulence of the opposing party, others dazzled by the brilliance of the first Empire, applauded the change of Government. Who could have foretold that the new Empire would tumble to pieces as it did, in a terrible war and national wreck?

So it came to pass that I abandoned, once and for all, inflammatory politics, even as one casts off a burden on the road in order to walk more lightly, and from henceforth I gave myself up entirely to my country and my art—my Provence, from whom I had never received aught but pure joy.

One evening, about this time, withdrawn in contemplation, roaming in quest of my rhymes, —for I have always found my verses by the highways and byways—I met an old man tending his sheep. It was the worthy Jean, a character well known to me. The sky was covered with stars, the screech-owl hooted, and the following dialogue took place :

" You have wandered far, Mister Frédéric," began the shepherd.

" I am taking a little air, Master Jean," I answered.

" You are going for a turn among the stars ? "

" Master Jean, you have said it. I am so heartily sick, disillusioned and disheartened with the things of earth, that I wish to-night to ascend and lose myself in the kingdom of the stars."

" Well, I myself," said he, " make an excursion there nearly every night, and I assure you the journey is one of the most beautiful."

"But how does one manage to find one's way in that unfathomable depth of light?"

"If you would like to follow me, sir, while the sheep eat, I will guide you gently and show you all."

"Worthy Jean, I take you at your word" I readily agreed.

"Now, let us mount by that road which shows all white from north to south: it is the road of Saint-Jacques. It goes from France straight over to Spain. When the Emperor Charlemagne made war with the Saracens, the great Saint-Jacques of Galice marked it out before him to show him the way."

"It is what the pagans called the Milky Way," I observed.

"Possibly," he replied with indifference. "I tell you what I have always heard. Now, do you see that fine chariot with its four wheels which dazzles all the north? That is the Chariot of the Souls. The three stars which precede it are the three beasts of the team, and the small star which is near the third is named the Charioteer."

"They are what the books call the Great Bear."

"As you please—but look, look, all around are falling stars—they are the poor souls who have just entered Paradise. Make the sign of the Cross, Mister Frédéric."

"Beautiful angels, may God be with you!"

"But see," he went on, "a fine star shining there, not far from the chariot. It is the drover of the skies."

"Which in astronomy they call Arcturus."

"That is of no importance. Now look over there in the north at the star which scarcely scintillates: that is the seaman's star, otherwise called the Tramontane. She is nearly always visible, and serves as a signal to sailors, they think themselves lost if they lose the Tramontane."

"Also called the Polar Star," said I; "it is found in the Little Bear, and as the north wind comes from there, the sailors of Provence, like those of Italy, say they are going to the Bear when they go against that wind."

"Now turn your head," said the shepherd, "you will see the Chicken-coop twinkling, or, if you like it better, the Brood of Chickens."

"Which the learned have named the Pleiades, and the Gascon, the Dog's Cart."

"That's so," he allowed. "A little lower shine the Signalmen, specially appointed to mark the hours for the shepherds. Some call them the 'Three Kings,' others the 'Three Bells.'"

"Just so, it is Orion and his Belt."

"Very well," conceded my friend, "now still

lower, always towards the meridian, shines Jean de Milan."

"Sirius, if I mistake not."

"Jean de Milan is the torch of the stars," he continued. "Jean de Milan had been invited one day, with the Signalmen and the Young Chicken, so they say, to a wedding, the wedding of the beautiful Maguelone, of whom we will speak again. The Young Chicken set out, it appears, early, and took the high road. The Signalmen, having taken a lower cut, at last arrived there also. Jean de Milan slept on, and when he rose took a short cut, and to stop them, threw his stick flying in the air—which caused them to be called ever since, by some people, the Stick of Jean de Milan."

"And that one, far away, which is just showing its nose above the mountain?" I inquired.

"That is the Cripple," he replied. "He also was asked to the wedding, but as he limps, poor devil, he goes but slowly. Also, he gets up late and goes to bed early."

"And that one going down, over there, in the west, and shining like a bride?" I asked.

"Ah, that is our own—the Shepherds' Star, the Star of the Morning, which lights us at dawn when we unfold the sheep, and at sundown when we drive them in. That is she, the Queen of

stars, the beautiful star, Maguelone, the lovely Maguelone, pursued unceasingly by Pierre de Provence, with whom, every seven years, takes place her marriage."

"The conjunction, I believe, of Venus and Jupiter, or occasionally of Saturn."

"According to taste," replied my guide—"but, hist, Labrit! Oh, the rascally dog, the scoundrel! Whilst we talk, the sheep have scattered. Hist, bring them back! I must go myself. Good evening, Mister Frédéric, take care you do not lose yourself."

"Good-night, friend Jean."

Let us, also, return, like the shepherd, to our sheep.

About this time, in a publication called *Les Provençales*, to which many Provençal writers, old and young, contributed, I and other of the younger poets engaged in a correspondence on the subject of the language and of our productions. The result of these discussions, which became extremely animated, was the idea of a Conference of Provençal poets. And under the directorship of Roumanille and of Gaut, both of whom had been contributors to the journal *Lou Boui-Abaisse*, the first meeting was held on August 29, 1852, at Arles, in a room in the ancient archbishop's

palace, under the presidency of Doctor d'Astros, oldest member of the Bards. Here we all met and made acquaintance, Aubanel, Aubert, Bourelly, Cassan, Crousillat, Désanet, Garcin, Gaut, Gelu, Mathieu, Roumanille, myself and others. Thanks to the good Carpentrassian, Bonaventure Laurent, our portraits had the honour of being in *L'Illustration* (September 18, 1852).

Roumanille, when inviting Monsieur Moquin-Tandon, professor of the Faculty of Science at Toulouse, and a gifted poet in his tongue of Montpellier, had begged him to bring Jasmin to Arles. But the author of "Marthe la folle," the illustrious poet of Gascony, answered the invitation of Moquin-Tandon: "Since you are going to Arles, tell them they may gather together in forties and in hundreds, but they will never make the noise that I have made quite alone!"

"That is Jasmin from head to foot!" Roumanille said to me. "That reply reproduces him much more faithfully than does the bronze statue raised at Agen in his honour."

In short, the hairdresser of Agen, in spite of his genius, was always somewhat surly with those who, like himself, wished to sing in our tongue. Roumanille, since we are on the subject, some years previously, had sent him his "Pâquerettes,"

dedicating to him "Madeleine," one of the best poems of the collection. Jasmin did not even deign to thank him. But in 1848, when the Gascon passed through Avignon, on the occasion of his assisting at a concert given by the harpist, Mademoiselle Roaldes, Roumanille and several others went to offer their respects afterwards to the poet, who had made tears flow as he recited his "Souvenirs."

"Who are you then?" asked Jasmin of the poet of Saint-Rémy.

"One of your admirers, Joseph Roumanille."

"Roumanille!—I remember that name. But I thought it belonged to a dead author."

"Monsieur, as you see," answered the author of the 'Pâquerettes,' who never allowed any one to tread on his toes, "I am young enough, if it please God, some day to write your epitaph."

One who was much more gracious to our Congress at Arles was the good Reboul, who wrote to us thus: "May God bless you. May your fights be feasts, your rivals, friends! He who created the skies made those of our country so wide and so blue that there is room for all stars."

Jules Canonge of Nimes also wrote to us: "My friends, if you have to battle one day for your cause, remember it was at Arles that you held your first meeting, and that your torch

was lit in the proud and noble city which has for arms and for motto, 'The sword and the wrath of the lion.'"

The Congress at Arles had succeeded too well not to be renewed. The following year, on August 21, 1853, at the suggestion of Gaut, the jovial poet of Aix, an assembly was held at that city. This "Festival of the Bards," was twice as large as that held at Arles. It was on this occasion that Brizeux, the grand bard of Brittany, addressed to us his greetings and his wishes:

With olive branches shall your heads be crowned;
Only the moors have I, where sad flowers blow:
The one, a sign of peace and joyous round;
The other, but a symbol of our woe.

Let us unite them, friends. Our sons henceforth
Shall wear these flowers upon their brow no more,
Nor sound th' entrancing songs of our dear North,
When we, the faithful few, have gone before.

Yet, can it die, the fresh and gentle breeze?
The storm-winds bear it hence upon their wing,
But it comes back to kiss the mossy leas.
Can the song die the nightingale did sing?

Nay, nay: our glorious speech in its decline,
O fair Provence, thou wilt restore and save!
Thro' long years yet that errant voice of thine
Shall sigh, O Merlin, whispering o'er my grave!

Besides those I have mentioned as figuring at the Congress of Arles, here are the new names that appeared at the Congress of Aix : Léon Alègre, the Abbé Aubert, Autheman Bellot, Brunet, Chalvet, the Abbé Lambert, Lejourdan, Peyrottes, Ricard-Bérard, Tavan, Vidal, &c., and three poetesses, Mesdemoiselles Reine Garde, Léonide Constans, and Hortense Rolland.

A literary *séance* was held after lunch in the Town Hall, before all the grand world of Aix. The big hall was courteously decorated with the colours of Provence and the arms of all the Provençal towns, and on a banner of crimson velvet were inscribed the names of the principal Provençal poets of the last century.

The Mayor of Aix, who also held the post of deputy, was at that time Monsieur Rigaud, the same who later made a translation of "Mirèio" into French verse.

After the overture, sung by a choir to the words of Jean-Batiste, and beginning :

> Troubadours of Provence
> For us this day is glorious.
> Behold the glad Renaissance
> Of the language of the South!

the President d'Astros discoursed delightfully in

Provençal, and then, in turn, each poet contributed some piece of his own.

Roumanille, much applauded, recited one of his tales, and sang "La Jeune Aveugle;" Aubanel gave us "Des Jumeaux," and I the "Fin du Moissonneur." But the greatest successes were produced by the song of the peasant Tavan, "Les Frisons de Mariette," and the recitation of the mason Lacroix, who made us all shiver with his "Pauvre Martine."

Emile Zola, then a scholar at the College of Aix, was present at this meeting, and forty years afterwards this is what he said in the discourse he gave at the Felibrée of Sceaux (1892):

"I was fifteen or sixteen years old, and I can see myself as a school-boy escaping from college in order to be present in the great room of the Town Hall at Aix at a poets' fête, somewhat resembling the one I have the honour to preside over to-day. Mistral was there, declaiming his 'Fin du Moissonneur'; Roumanille and Aubanel also, and many others who, a few years later, were to be the 'Félibres' and who were then but 'Troubadours.' At the banquet that night we had the pleasure of raising our glasses to the health of old Bellot, who had made a great name, not only in Marseilles but throughout Provence, as a comic

poet, and who, overcome at seeing this outburst of patriotic enthusiasm, replied to us somewhat sadly :

" ' I am but a bungler. In my poor life I have blackened much paper. But Gaut, Mistral, Crousillat, they who have the fire of youth, will unwind the tangled skein of our Provençal tongue.' "

CHAPTER XII

FONT-SEGUGNE

We were a set of youthful spirits at that time in Provence, all closely banded together with the object of a literary revival for our national tongue. We went at it heart and soul.

Nearly every Sunday, sometimes at Avignon, sometimes at Maillane, in the gardens of Saint-Rémy or on the heights of Châteauneuf, we met together for our small intimate festivities, our Provençal banquets, at which the poetry was of a finer flavour than the meats, and our enthusiasm intoxicated a good deal more than the wine.

It was on these occasions that Roumanille regaled us with his "Noëls" and "Dreamers" freshly coined from the mint, and that Aubanel, still holding the faith, but tugging at the leading-strings, recited to us his "Massacre of the Innocents." *Mireille* also, from time to time, appeared in newly turned-out strophes.

Every year about the Eve of Sainte-Agathe, "the poets," as they began to call us, assembled at the Judge's Farm, and there for three days

lived the gypsy's free unfettered life. Sainte-Agathe belongs properly to Sicily, where she is often invoked against the fires of Etna, but in spite of this she receives great devotion from the people of Arles and Maillane, the girls of the village regarding it as a coveted honour to serve as a priestess of her altar, and on the eve of her feast, before opening the dance on the green, the young couples, with their musicians, always commenced by giving a serenade to Sainte-Agathe outside the parish church. We, with the other gallants of the countryside, also went to pay our respects to the patroness of Maillane.

It is a curious thing, this homage offered to dead and gone saints, throughout the length and breadth of the land, in the north even as in the south, and continuing uninterruptedly for centuries upon centuries. What a passing and ephemeral thing in comparison is the fame and homage awarded to the poet, artist, scholar, or even warrior, remembered as they are by only a few admirers. Victor Hugo himself will never attain the fame of even the least saint on the calendar; take, for example, Saint-Gent, who for seven hundred years has seen his thousands of faithful flocking annually to his shrine in the mountains. No one more readily than Victor

Hugo recognised this truth, for, asked one day by a flatterer what glory in this world could excel that which crowned the poet, he answered promptly, "That of the saint."

Mathieu was in great request at the village dances, and we all watched him with admiration as he danced, now with Villette, now with Gango or Lali, my pretty cousins. In the meadow by the mill took place the wrestling contests, announced by the beating of tambours and presided over by old Jésette, the famous champion of former days, who, marching up and down, pitted one against the other, in strident tones enforcing the rules of the game.

One of us would ask him if he remembered how he had made the wrestler Quéquine, or some other rival, bite the dust, and once started, the old athlete would rehearse with delight his ancient victories, how he floored Bel-Arbre of Aramon, not to mention Rabasson, Creste d'Apt and, above all, Meissonier, the Hercules of Avignon, before whom no one could stand up. Ah, in those days he might truly say he had been invincible! He had gone by the name of the "Little Maillanais"—"the Flexible."

When our poets' réunions were at Saint-Rémy we met at the house of Roumanille's parents,

Jean-Denis and Pierrette, well-to-do market-gardeners living on their own land. On these occasions we dined in the open air under the shade of a vine-covered arbour. The best painted plates were had out in our honour, while Zine and Antoinette, the two sisters of our friend, handsome brunettes in their twenties, ministered to our wants and served us with the excellent *blanquette* they had themselves prepared.

A rugged old soldier was this Jean-Denis, father of Joseph Roumanille. He had served under Bonaparte, as he somewhat disdainfully called the Emperor, had fought in the battle of Waterloo and gained the Cross, which, however, in the confusion following the defeat, he never received. When his son, in after years, gained a decoration under MacMahon, he remarked : " The son receives what the father earned."

The following is the epitaph Roumanille inscribed on the tomb of his parents in the cemetery at Saint-Rémy :

To Jean-Denis Roumanille
Gardener. A man of worth and courage. 1791–1875.
And to Pierrette his Spouse
Good, pious and strong. 1793–1875.
They lived as Christians and died in peace.
God keep them.

Mas des Pommiers—Home of Joseph Roumanille.

Our meetings in Avignon were held at Aubanel's home in the street of Saint-Marc, which to-day is called by the name of the great Félibre poet. The house had formerly been a cardinal's palace, and has since been destroyed in making a new street. Just inside the vestibule stood the great wooden press with its big screw, which for two hundred years had served for printing the parochial and educational works of all the State.

Here we would take up our abode, somewhat awed by the odour of sanctity which seemed to emanate from those episcopal walls, and even more by Jeanneton, the old cook, who eyed us with a look which said plainly: "Why, here they are again!"

The kindly welcome, however, of our host's father, official printer to his Holiness the Pope, and the joviality of his uncle, the venerable Canon, soon put us at our ease.

At Brunet's and also Mathieu's we sometimes held our revels, but it was at Font-Ségugne, predestined to play an important part in our enterprise, that perhaps we most enjoyed ourselves in the charming country house belonging to the family of Giéra. Paul, the eldest son, was a notary at Avignon, and an enthusiastic supporter of our movement. His mother, a dignified and gracious

lady, two sisters, charming, joyous young girls, and a younger brother, Jules, devoted to the work of the White Penitents, made up the circle of this delightful home.

Font-Ségugne is situated near the Camp-Cabel, facing in the distance the great Ventoux mountain, and a few miles from the Fountain of Vaucluse. It takes its name from a little spring which runs at the foot of the castle. A delicious little copse of oaks, acacias and planes protects the place from winter winds and the summer sun.

Tavan, the peasant poet of Gadagne, says of Font-Ségugne: "It is the favourite trysting-spot of the village lovers on Sundays, for there they find a grateful shade, solitude, quiet nooks, little stone benches covered with ivy, winding paths among the trees, a lovely view, the song of birds, the rustling of leaves, the rippling of brooks! Where better than in such a spot can the solitary wander and dream of love, or the happy pair resort, and love?"

Here we came, to re-create ourselves like mountain birds—Roumanille, Mathieu, Brunet, Tavan, Crousillat, and, above all, Aubanel, under the spell of the eyes of Zani, a fair young friend of the young ladies of the house:

In his "Livre de l'Amour," Aubanel drew the portrait of his enchantress:

"Soon I shall see her—the young maiden with her slender form clad in a soft gown of grey—with her smooth brow and her beauteous eyes, her long black hair and lovely face. Soon I shall see her, the youthful virgin, and she will say to me 'Good evening.' Oh Zani, come quickly!"

In after years, when his Zani had taken the veil, he writes of Font-Ségugne, recalling the past:

"It is summer—the nights are clear. Over the copse the moon mounts and shines down on Camp-Cabel. Dost thou remember, behind the convent walls, thou with thy Spanish face, how we chased each other, running, racing like mad, among the trees, till in the dark wood thou wast afraid? And ah, how sweet it was when my arm stole round thy slender waist, and to the song of the nightingales we danced together, while thou didst mingle thy fresh young voice with the notes of the birds. Ah, sweet little friend, where are they now, those songs and joys! When tired of running, of laughing, of dancing, I remember how we sat down beneath the oak-trees to rest. My hand, a lover's hand, played with thy long raven tresses which, loosened, fell about thee—and smiling gently as a mother on her child, thou didst not forbid me."

On the walls of the room at the château where Zani had once slept, he wrote these lines :

" O little chamber—dear little chamber ! How small to hold so many remembrances ! As I cross the threshold it seems to me I hear them come—those two sweet maids Zani and Julia. But never will they sleep again in this little room—those days are flown for ever—Julia dwells no more on earth, and my Zani is a nun."

No spot more favourable could have been imagined wherein to cradle a glorious dream, to bring to flower the bloom of an ideal, than this château on the hillside, surrounded by the serene blue distances, enlivened by these lovely laughing maidens and a group of young men vowed to the worship of the Beautiful under the three headings of Poetry, Love, and Provence, a trinity which for them formed always a unity.

It was written in the stars that one Sunday of flowers, May 21, 1854, at the full tide of spring and youth, seven poets should meet at this château of Font-Ségugne.

Paul Giéra, a joking spirit who signed his name backwards as " Glaup " ; Roumanille, a propagandist who, without appearing to do so, unceasingly fanned the flame of the sacred fire all around him ; Aubanel, converted by Roumanille

to our tongue, and who, under the influence of love's sun, was at this moment bursting into bloom with his "Pomegranate"; Mathieu, lost in visions of a reawakened Provence, and, as ever, the gallant squire of all fair damsels; Brunet with his face resembling the Christ, dreaming his utopia of a terrestrial Paradise; and the peasant Tavan, who, stretched on the grass, sang all day like the cicada; finally, Frédéric, ready to send on the wings of the mistral, like the mountain shepherds to their flocks, his hailing cry to all brothers of the race, and to plant his standard on the summit of the Ventoux.

At dinner, the conversation turned that evening, as so often before, on the best means of rescuing our language from the decadence into which it had fallen since those ruling classes, faithless to the honour of Provence, had relegated the language to the position of a mere dialect. And, in view of the fact that at the last two Congresses, both at Arles and at Aix, every attempt on the part of the young school of Avignon patriots to rehabilitate the Provençal tongue had been badly received and dismissed, the seven at Font-Ségugne determined to band together and take the enterprise in hand.

"And now," said Glaup, "as we are forming a

new body we must have a new name. The old one of "minstrel" will not do, as every rhymer, even he who has nothing to rhyme about, adopts it. That of troubadour is no better, for, appropriated to designate the poets of a certain period, it has been tarnished by abuse. We must find something new."

Then I took up the speech:

"My friends," said I, "in an old country legend I believe we shall find the predestined name." And I proceeded: "His Reverence Saint-Anselme, reading and writing one day from the Holy Scriptures, was lifted up into the highest heaven. Seated near the Infant Christ he beheld the Holy Virgin. Having saluted the aged saint, the Blessed Virgin continued her discourse to her Infant Son, relating how she came to suffer for His sake seven bitter wounds." Here I omitted the recital of the wounds until I came to the following passage: "The fourth wound that I suffered for Thee, O my precious Son, it was when I lost Thee, and seeking three days and three nights found Thee not until I entered the Temple, where Thou wast disputing with the scribes of the Law, with the seven 'Félibres' of the Law."

"The seven Félibres of the Law—but here we are!" cried they all in chorus: "Félibre is the name."

Then Glaup, filling up the seven glasses with a bottle of Châteauneuf which had been just seven years in the cellar, proposed the health of the Félibres. "And since we have begun baptizing," he continued, "let us adopt all the vocabulary which can be legitimately derived from our new name. I suggest, therefore, that every branch of Félibres numbering not less than seven members shall be called a 'Félibrerie,' in memory, gentlemen, of the Pleiades of Avignon."

"And I," said Roumanille, "beg to propose the pretty verb 'félibriser,' signifying to meet together as we are now doing."

"I wish to add," said Mathieu, "the term 'félibrée' to signify a festivity of Provençal poets."

"And I," struck in Tavan, "give the adjective 'félibréen' to all things descriptive of our movement."

"And to the ladies who shall sing in the tongue of Provence I dedicate the name of 'Félibresse,'" said Aubanel.

Upon which Brunet added promptly :

"And the children of all Félibres I baptize 'Félibrillons.'"

"And let me conclude," I cried, "with this national word, 'Félibrige,' which shall designate our work and association."

Then Glaup took up the speech again :

"But this is not all, my friends—behold us, 'the wise ones of the Law'—but how about the Law? Who is going to make it?"

"I am," I answered unhesitatingly, "even if I have to give twenty years of my life to it; I will undertake to show that our speech is a language, not a dialect, and I will reconstruct the laws on which it was once formed."

How strange it seems to look back on that scene—like some fairy-tale, and yet it was from that day of light-hearted festivity, of youthful ideals and enthusiasms, that sprang the gigantic task completed in the "Treasury of the Félibres,"* a

* Monsieur Paul Mariéton in his "Terre Provençale" says of this work: "The history of a people is contained in this book. No one can ever know what devotion, knowledge, discrimination and intuition such a work represents, undertaken and concluded as it was during the twenty best years of a poet's life. All the words of the Oc language in its seven different dialects, each one compared with its equivalent in the Latin tongue, all the proverbs and idioms of the South together with every characteristic expression either in use or long since out of vogue, make up this incomparable Thesaurus of a tenacious language, which is no more dead to-day than it was three hundred years ago, and which is now reconquering the hearts of all the faithful." This "Treasury of the Félibres" opens with the following lines:

"O people of the South, hearken now to my words:
"If thou would'st regain the lost Empire of thy speech and equip thyself anew, dig deep in this mine."

Mme. Frédéric Mistral, ist Queen of the Félibres.

dictionary of the Provençal tongue, including every variety of derivation and idiom, a work to which I devoted twenty years of my life.

In the *Provençal Almanac* for 1855, Paul Giéra writes :

" When the Law is completed which is being now prepared by one of our number, and which will clearly set forth the why and wherefore of everything, all opponents will be finally silenced."

It was on this memorable occasion at Font-Ségugne that we also decided on a small annual publication which should be a connecting-link between all Félibres, the standard-bearer of our ideas, and a means of communicating them to the people.

Having settled all these points, we suddenly bethought us that this same May 21 was no other than the Feast of the Star (Saint-Estelle), and even as the Magi, recognising the mystic influx of some high conjunction, we saluted the Star so opportunely presiding over the cradle of our redemption.

That same year, 1855, appeared the first number of the *Provençal Almanac*, numbering 112 pages. And conspicuous among the contributions was our " Song of the Félibres," which set forth the programme of our popular Renaissance.

CHAPTER XIII

THE "PROVENÇAL ALMANAC"

THE *Provençal Almanac*, welcomed by the country-people, delighted in by the patriots, highly favoured by the learned and eagerly looked forward to by the artistic, rapidly gained a footing with the public, and the publication, which the first year had numbered five hundred copies, quickly increased to twelve hundred, three thousand, five, seven, and then ten thousand, which figure remained the lowest average during a period of from fifteen to twenty years.

As this periodical was essentially one for the family circle, this figure represents, I should judge, at least fifty thousand readers. It is impossible to give any idea of the trouble, devotion and pride which both Roumanille and I bestowed unceasingly on this beloved little work during the first forty years. Without mentioning the numerous poems which were published in it, and those Chronicles wherein were contained the whole history of the Félibre movement, the quantity of tales, legends, witticisms, and jokes culled from all parts of the

country made this publication a unique collection. The essence of the spirit of our race was to be found here, with its traditions and characteristics, and were the people of Provence to one day disappear, their manner of living and thinking would be rediscovered, faithfully portrayed such as they were, in this Almanac of the Félibres.

Roumanille has published in a separate volume, "Tales of Provence," the flower of those attractive stories he contributed in profusion to the Almanac. I have never collected my tales, but will here give a few specimens of those which were among the most popular of my contributions, and which have been widely circulated in translations by Alphonse Daudet, Paul Arène, E. Blavat, and other good friends.

THE GOOD PILGRIM

LEGEND OF PROVENCE

I

Master Archimbaud was nearly a hundred years old. He had been formerly a rugged man of war, but now, crippled and paralysed with age, he never left his bed, being unable to move.

Old Master Archimbaud had three sons. One morning he called the eldest to him and said :

" Come here, Archimbalet ! While lying quiet in my bed and meditating, for the bedridden have time for reflection, I remembered that once in the midst of a battle, finding myself in mortal danger, I vowed if God delivered me to go on a pilgrimage to Rome. . . . Alas, I am as old as earth ! and can no longer go on a journey ; I wish, my son, that thou wouldst make that pilgrimage in my stead ; sorely it troubles me to die without accomplishing my vow."

The eldest son replied :

" What the devil has put this into your head, a pilgrimage to Rome and I don't know where else ! Father, eat, drink, lie still in your bed and say as many Paternosters as you please ! but the rest of us have something else to do."

The next morning, Master Archimbaud called to him his second son :

" Listen, my son," he said ; " meditating here on my bed and reviewing the past—for, seest thou, in bed one has leisure for thinking—I remembered that once, in a fight, finding myself in mortal danger, I vowed to God to make the great journey to Rome . . . . Alas ! I am old as earth ! I can

no longer go to the wars. Greatly I desire that thou wouldest in my stead make the pilgrimage to Rome."

The second son replied :

" Father, in two weeks we shall have the hot weather ! Then the fields must be ploughed, the vines dressed, the hay cut. Our eldest must take the flocks to the mountains ; the youngest is nought but a boy. Who will give the orders if I go to Rome, idling by the roads ? Father, eat, sleep, and leave us in peace."

Next morning good Master Archimband called his youngest son :

" Espérit, my child, approach," said he ; " I promised the good God to make a pilgrimage to Rome. . . . But I am old as earth ! I can no longer go to the wars. . . . I would gladly send thee in my place, poor boy. But thou art too young, thou dost not know the way ; Rome is very far, my God ! should some misfortune overtake thee . . . ! "

" My father, I will go," answered the youth.

But the mother cried :

" I will not have thee go ! This old dotard, with his war and his Rome, will end by getting on our nerves ; not content with grumbling, complaining and moaning the whole year through, he

will send now this poor dear innocent where he will only get lost."

"Mother," said the young son, "the wish of a father is an order from God! When God commands, one must go."

And Espérit, without further talk, went and filled a small gourd with wine, took some bread and onions in his knapsack, put on his new shoes, chose a good oaken stick from the wood-house, threw his cloak over his shoulder, embraced his old father, who gave him much good advice, bade farewell to all his relations, and departed.

II

But before taking the road, he went devoutly to hear the blessed Mass; and was it not wonderful that on leaving the church he found on the threshold a beautiful youth who addressed him in these words:

"Friend, are you not going to Rome?"

"I am," said Espérit.

"And I also, comrade: If it pleases you, we could make the journey together."

"Willingly, my friend."

Now this gracious youth was an angel sent by God. Espérit and the angel then set forth on

Félix Gras. Poet and Félibre.

the road to Rome; and thus, joyfully, through sunshine and shower, begging their bread and singing psalms, the little gourd at the end of a stick, they arrived at last in the city of Rome.

Having rested, they paid their devotions at the great church of Saint Peter, they visited in turn the basilicas, the chapels, the oratories, the sanctuaries, and all the sacred monuments, kissed the relics of the Apostles Peter and Paul, of the virgins, the martyrs, and also of the true Cross, and finally, before leaving, they saw the Pope, who gave them his blessing.

Then Espérit with his companion went to rest under the porch of Saint Peter, and Espérit fell asleep. Now in his sleep the pilgrim saw in a dream his mother and his brothers burning in hell, and he saw himself with his father in the eternal glory of the Paradise of God.

"Alas! if this is so," he cried, "I beseech thee, my God, that I may take out of the flames my mother, my poor mother, and my brothers!"

And God replied:

"As for thy brothers, it is impossible, for they have disobeyed my commandments; but thy mother, perhaps, if thou canst, before her death, make her perform three charities."

Then Espérit awoke. The angel had disappeared.

In vain he waited, searched for him, inquired after him, nowhere could he be found, and Espérit was obliged to leave Rome all alone.

He went toward the sea-coast, where he picked up some shells with which he ornamented his cloak and his hat, and from there, slowly, by high roads and by-paths, valleys, and mountains, begging and praying, he came again to his own country.

III

It was thus he arrived at last at his native place and his own home. He had been away about two years. Haggard and wasted, tanned, dusty, ragged and bare-foot, with his little gourd at the end of his staff, his rosary and his shells, he was unrecognisable. No one knew him as he made his way to the paternal door and, knocking, said gently :

" For God's sake, I pray of your charity give to the poor pilgrim."

" Oh what a nuisance you are ! Every day some of you pass here—a set of vagabonds, scamps, and vagrants ! "

" Alas ! my spouse," said the poor old Archimbaud from his bed, " give him something : who knows but our son is perhaps even at this moment in the same need ! "

Then the woman, though still grumbling, went off, and cutting a hunk of bread, gave it to the poor beggar.

The following day the pilgrim returned again to the door of his parents' house, saying :

" For God's sake, my mistress, give a little charity to the poor pilgrim."

" What ! you are here again ! " cried the old woman. " You know very well I gave to you yesterday—these gluttons would eat one out of house and home."

" Alas, good wife ! " interposed the good old Archimbaud, " didst thou not eat yesterday and yet thou hast eaten again to-day ? Who knows but our son may be in the same sad plight ! "

And again his wife relenting went off and fetched a slice of bread for the poor beggar.

The next day Espérit returned again to his home and said :

" For God's sake, my mistress, grant shelter to the poor pilgrim."

" Nay," cried the hard old body, " be off with you and lodge with the ragamuffins ! "

" Alas, wife ! " interposed again the good old Archimbaud, " give him shelter : who knows if our own child, our poor Espérit, is not at this very hour exposed to the severity of the storm."

"Ah, yes, thou art right," said the mother, softening, and she went at once and opened the door of the stable; then poor Espérit entered, and on the straw behind the beasts he crouched down in a corner.

At early dawn the following morning the mother and brothers of Espérit went to open the stable door. . . . Behold the stable was all illumined, and there lay the pilgrim, stiff and white in death, while four tall tapers burned around him. The straw on which he was stretched was glistening, the spiders' webs, shining with rays, hung from the beams above, like the draperies of a mortuary chapel. The beasts of the stall, mules and oxen, pricked up startled ears, while their great eyes brimmed with tears. A perfume of violets filled the place, and the poor pilgrim, his face all glorious, held in his clasped hands a paper on which was written: "I am your son."

Then all burst into tears, and falling on their knees, made the sign of the cross: Espérit was henceforth a saint.

(*Almanach Provençal*, 1879.)

JARJAYE IN PARADISE

JARJAYE, a street-porter of Tarascon, having just died, with closed eyes fell into the other world. Down and down he fell! Eternity is vast, pitch-black, limitless, lugubrious. Jarjaye knew not where to set foot, all was uncertainty, his teeth chattered, he beat the air. But as he wandered in the vast space, suddenly he perceived in the distance, a light, it was far off, very far off. He directed himself towards it; it was the door of the good God.

Jarjaye knocked, bang, bang, on the door.

"Who is there?" asked Saint Peter.

"It's me!" answered Jarjaye.

"Who—thou?"

"Jarjaye."

"Jarjaye of Tarascon?"

"That's it—himself!"

"But you good-for-nothing," said Saint Peter, "how have you the face to demand entrance into the blessed Paradise, you who for the last twenty years have never said your prayers, who, when they said to you, 'Jarjaye, come to Mass,' answered 'I only go to the afternoon Mass!' thou, who in derision calledst the thunder, 'the drum of the

snails;' thou did'st eat meat on Fridays, saying, 'What does it matter, it is flesh that makes flesh, what goes into the body cannot hurt the soul;' thou who, when they rang the Angelus, instead of making the sign of the cross like a good Christian, cried mocking, 'A pig is hung on the bell'; thou who, when thy father admonished thee, 'Jarjaye, God will surely punish thee,' answered, 'The good God, who has seen him? Once dead one is well dead.' Finally, thou who didst blaspheme and deny the holy oil and baptism, is it possible that thou darest to present thyself here?"

The unhappy Jarjaye replied:

"I deny nothing, I am a sinner. But who could know that after death there would be so many mysteries! Any way, yes, I have sinned. The medicine is uncorked—if one must drink it, why one must. But at least, great Saint Peter, let me see my uncle for a little, just to give him the latest news from Tarascon."

"What uncle?"

"My Uncle Matéry, he who was a White Penitent."

"Thy Uncle Matéry! He is undergoing a hundred years of purgatory!"

"Malédiction! a hundred years! Why what had he done amiss?"

"Thou rememberest that he carried the cross in the procession. One day some wicked jesters gave each other the word, and one of them said, 'Look at Matéry, who is carrying the cross;' and a little further another repeated, 'Look at Matéry, who is carrying the cross,' and at last another said like this, 'Look, look at Matéry, what is he carrying?' Matéry got angry, it appears, and answered, 'A jackanapes like thee.' And forthwith he had a stroke and died in his anger."

"Well then, let me see my Aunt Dorothée, who was very, very religious."

"Bah! she must be with the devil, I don't know her."

"It does not astonish me in the least that she should be with the devil, for in spite of being so devout and religious, she was spiteful as a viper. Just imagine——"

"Jarjaye, I have no leisure to listen to thee: I must go and open to a poor sweeper whose ass has just sent him to Paradise with a kick."

"Oh, great Saint Peter, since you have been so kind, and looking costs nothing, I beg you let me just peep into the Paradise which they say is so beautiful."

"I will consider it—presently, ugly Huguenot that thou art!"

"Now come, Saint Peter, just remember that down there at Tarascon my father, who is a fisherman, carries your banner in the procession, and with bare feet——"

"All right," said the saint, "for your father's sake I will allow it, but see here, scum of the earth, it is understood that you only put the end of your nose inside."

"That is enough."

Then the celestial porter half opening the door said to Jarjaye:

"There—look."

But he, suddenly turning his back, stepped into Paradise backwards.

"What are you doing?" asked Saint Peter.

"The great light dazzles me," replied the Tarasconais, "I must go in backwards. But, as you ordered, when I have put in my nose, be easy, I will go no further."

Now, thought he, delighted, I have got my nose in the hay.

The Tarasconais was in Paradise.

"Oh," said he, "how happy one feels! how beautiful it is! What music!"

After a moment the doorkeeper said:

"When you have gaped enough, you will go out, for I have no more time to waste."

"Don't you worry," said Jarjaye. "If you have anything to do, go about your business. I will go out when I will go out. I am not the least in a hurry."

"But that was not our agreement!"

"My goodness, holy man, you seem very distressed! It would be different if there were not plenty of room. But thank God, there is no squash!"

"But I ask you to go, for if the good God were to pass by——"

"Oh! you arrange that as you can. I have always heard, that he who finds himself well off, had better stay. I am here—so I stay."

Saint Peter frowned and stamped. He went to find St. Yves.

"Yves," he said, "You are a barrister—you must give me an opinion."

"Two if you like," replied Saint Yves.

"I am in a nice fix! This is my dilemma," and he related all. "Now what ought I to do?"

"You require," said Saint Yves, "a good solicitor, and must then cite by bailiff the said Jarjaye to appear before God."

They went to look for a good solicitor, but no one had ever seen such a person in Paradise. They

asked for a bailiff—still more impossible to find. Saint Peter was at his wits' end.

Just then Saint Luke passed by.

"Peter, you look very melancholy! Has our Lord been giving you another rebuke?"

"Oh, my dear fellow, don't talk of it—I am in the devil of a fix, do you see. A certain Jarjaye has got into Paradise by a trick, and I don't know how to get him out."

"Where does he come from, this Jarjaye?"

"From Tarascon."

"A Tarasconais?" cried Saint Luke. "Oh! what an innocent you are! There is nothing, nothing easier than to make him go out. Being, as you know, a friend of cattle, the patron of cattle-drovers, I am often in the Camargue, Arles, Beaucaire, Nîmes, Tarascon, and I know that people. I have studied their peculiarities, and how to manage them. Come—you shall see."

At that moment there went by a flight of cherubs.

"Little ones!" called Saint Luke, "here, here!"

The cherubs descended.

"Go quietly outside Paradise—and when you get in front of the door, run past crying out: 'The oxen—the oxen!'"

So the cherubs went outside Paradise and when

they were in front of the door they rushed past crying, "Oxen, oxen! Oh see, see the cattle-drover!"

Jarjaye turned round, amazed.

"Thunder! What, do they drive cattle here? I am off!" he cried.

He rushed to the door like a whirlwind and, poor idiot, went out of Paradise.

Saint Peter quickly closed the door and locked it, then putting his head out of the grating:

"Well, Jarjaye," he called jeeringly, "how do you find yourself now?"

"Oh, it doesn't matter," replied Jarjaye. "If they had really been cattle I should not have regretted my place in Paradise!"

And so saying he plunged, head foremost, into the abyss.

(*Almanach Provençal*, 1864.)

THE FROG OF NARBONNE

I

Young Pignolet, journeyman carpenter, nicknamed the "Flower of Grasse," one afternoon in the month of June returned in high spirits

from making his tour of France. The heat was overpowering. In his hand he carried his stick furbished with ribbons, and in a packet on his back his implements (chisels, plane, mallet) folded in his working-apron. Pignolet climbed the wide road of Grasse by which he had descended when he departed some three or four years before. On his way, according to the custom of the Companions of the Guild of Duty, he stopped at Sainte-Baume" the tomb of Master Jacques, founder of the Association. After inscribing his surname on a rock, he descended to Saint-Maximin, to pay his respects and take his colours from Master Fabre, he who inaugurates the Sons of Duty. Then, proud as Cæsar, his kerchief on his neck, his hat smart with a bunch of many-coloured ribbons, and hanging from his ears two little compasses in silver, he valiantly strode on through a cloud of dust, which powdered him from head to foot.

What a heat! Now and again he looked at the fig-trees to see if there was any fruit, but they were not yet ripe. The lizards gaped in the scorched grass, and the foolish grasshopper, on the dusty olives, the bushes and long grass, sang madly in the blazing sun.

"By all the Saints, what heat!" Pignolet

ejaculated at intervals. Having some hours previously drank the last drop from his gourd, he panted with thirst, and his shirt was soaking. "But forwards!" he said. "Soon we will be at Grasse. Oh heavens, what a blessing! what a joy to embrace my father, my mother, and to drink from a jug of water of the spring of Grasse! Then to tell of my tour through France and to kiss Mïon on her fresh cheeks, and, soon as the feast of the Madeleine arrives to marry her, and never leave home any more. Onward, Pignolet—only another little step!"

At last he is at the entrance to Grasse, and in four strides at his father's workshop.

II

"My boy! Oh, my fine boy," cried the old Pignol, leaving his work, "welcome home. Marguerite! the youngster is here! Run, draw some wine, prepare a meal, lay the cloth. Oh! the blessing to see thee home again! How art thou?"

"Not so bad, God be thanked. And all of you, at home, father, are you thriving?"

"Oh! like the poor old things we are . . . but hasn't he grown tall, the youngster!" And all the world embraced him, father, mother, neighbours,

friends, and the girls! They took his packet from him and the children fingered admiringly the fine ribbons on his hat and walking-stick. The old Marguerite, with brimming eyes, quickly lighted the stove with a handful of chips, and while she floured some dried haddock wherewith to regale the young man, the old man sat down at a table with his son, and they drank to his happy return, clinking glasses.

"Now here," began old Master Pignol, "in less than four years thou hast finished thy tour of France and behold thee, according to thy account, passed and received as Companion of the Guild of Duty! How everything changes! In my time it required seven years, yes, seven good years, to achieve that honour. It is true, my son, that there in the shop I gave thee a pretty good training, and that for an apprentice, already thou didst not handle badly the plane and the jointer. But any way, the chief thing is thou shouldst know thy business, and thou hast, so at least I believe, now seen and known all that a fine fellow should know, who is son of a master."

"Oh father, as for that," replied the young man, "without boasting, I think nobody in the carpenter's shop could baffle me."

"Very well," said the old man, "see here while

the cod-fish is singing in the pot, just relate to me what were the finest objects thou didst note in running round the country ? "

III

" To begin with, father, you know that on first leaving Grasse, I went over to Toulon where I entered the Arsenal. It's not necessary to tell you all that is inside there, you have seen it as well as I."

" Yes, pass on, I know it."

" After leaving Toulon I went and hired myself out at Marseilles, a fine large town, advantageous for the workman, where some comrades pointed out to me, a sea-horse which serves as a sign at an inn."

" Well ? "

" Faith, from there, I went north to Aix, where I admired the sculptures of the porch of Saint-Saviour."

" I have seen that."

" Then, from there, we went to Arles, and we saw the roof of the Commune of Arles."

" So well constructed that one cannot imagine how it holds itself in the air."

" From Arles, my father, we went to the city

of Saint-Gille, and there we saw the famous Vis——"

"Yes, yes, a wonder both in structure and outline. Which shows us, my son, that in other days as well as to-day there were good workmen."

"Then we directed our steps from Saint-Gille to Montpellier, and there they showed us the celebrated Shell . . . ."

"Oh yes—which is in the Vignolle, and the book calls it the 'horn of Montpellier.'"

"That's it; and from there we marched to Narbonne."

"Ah! that is what I was waiting for!"

"But why, my father? At Narbonne I saw the 'Three Nurses,' and then the Archbishop's palace, also the wood carvings in the church of Saint-Paul."

"And then?"

"My father, the song says nothing more than:

"'Carcassone and Narbonne are two very good towns, to take on the way to Bezièrs; Pézénas is quite nice; but the prettiest girls are at Montpellier.'"

"Why bungler! Didst thou not see the Frog?"

"But what frog?"

"The Frog which is at the bottom of the font of the church of Saint Paul. Ah! I am no longer

surprised that thou hast finished so quickly thy tour of France, booby! The frog at Narbonne! the masterpiece which men go to see from all the ends of the earth! And this idiot," cried the old Pignol getting more and more excited, "this wicked waster, who gives himself out as 'companion,' has not even seen the Frog at Narbonne! Oh! that a son of a master should have to hang his head for shame in his father's house. No, my son, never shall that be said. Now eat, drink, and go to thy bed, but to-morrow morning, if thou wilt be on good terms with me, return to Narbonne and see the Frog!"

IV

Poor Pignolet knew that his father was not one to retract and that he was not joking. So he ate, drank, went to bed, and the next morning, at dawn, without further talk, having stocked his knapsack with food, he started off to Narbonne.

With his feet bruised and swollen, exhausted by heat and thirst, along the dusty roads and highway tramped poor Pignolet.

At the end of seven or eight days he arrived at the town of Narbonne, from whence, according to the proverb, "comes no good wind and no good

person." Pignolet—he was not singing this time, let it be understood—without taking the time to eat a mouthful or drink a drop at the inn, at once walked off to the church of Saint-Paul and straight to the font to look at the Frog.

And truly there in the marble vase, beneath the clear water, squatted a frog with reddish spots, so well sculptured that he seemed alive, looking up, with a bantering expression in his two yellow eyes at poor Pignolet, come all the way from Grasse on purpose to see him.

"Ah, little wretch!" cried the carpenter in sudden wrath. "Thou hast caused me to tramp four hundred miles beneath that burning sun! Take that and remember henceforth Pignolet of Grasse!"

And therewith the bully draws from his knapsack a mallet and chisel. Bang!—at a stroke he takes off one of the frog's legs! They say that the holy water became suddenly red as though stained with blood, and that the inside of the font, since then, has remained reddened.

(*Almanach Provençal*, 1890.)

THE YOUNG MONTELAISE

Once upon a time there lived at Monteux, the village of the good Saint-Gent and of Nicolas Saboly, a girl fair and fine as gold. They called her Rose. She was the daughter of an inn-keeper. And as she was good and sang like an angel, the curé of Monteux placed her at the head of the choristers of his church.

It happened one year that, for the feast of the patron Saint of Monteux, the father of Rose engaged a solo singer.

This singer, who was young, fell in love with the fair Rose, and faith, she fell in love with him. Then, one fine day, these two children, without much ado, were married, and the little Rose became Madame Bordas. Good-bye to Monteux! They went away together. Ah! how delightful it was, free as the air and young as the bubbling spring of water, to live without a care, in the full tide of love, and sing for a living.

The beautiful fête where Rose first sang was that of Sainte-Agathe, the patroness of Maillane.

It was at the Café de la Paix (now Café du Soleil), and the room was full as an egg. Rose, not more frightened than a sparrow on a wayside

willow, stood straight up on the platform, with her fair hair, and pretty bare arms, her husband at her feet accompanying her on the guitar. The place was thick with smoke, for it was full of peasants, from Graveson, Saint-Rémy, Eyrague, besides those of Maillane. But one heard not a word of rough language. They only said :

" Isn't she pretty ! And such a fine style ! She sings like an organ ! and she does not come from afar—only just from Monteux."

It is true that Rose only gave them beautiful songs. She sang of her native land, the flag, battles, liberty and glory, and with such passionate fervour and enthusiasm it stirred all hearts. Then, when she had finished she cried, " Long live Saint Gent ! "

Applause followed enough to bring down the house. The girl descended among the audience and smiling, made the collection. The sous rained into the wooden bowl, and smiling and content as though she had a hundred thousand francs, she poured the money into her husband's guitar, saying to him :

" Here—see—if this lasts, we shall soon be rich ! "

II

When Madame Bordas had done all the fêtes of our neighbourhood, she became ambitious to try the towns. There, as in the villages, the Montelaise shone. She sang "la Pologne" with her flag in her hand, she put into it so much soul, such emotion, that she made every one tremble with excitement.

At Avignon, at Cette, Toulouse and Bordeaux she was adored by the people. At last she said:

"Now only Paris remains."

So she went to Paris. Paris is the pinnacle to which all aspire. There as in the provinces she soon became the idol of the people.

It was during the last days of the Empire; 'the chestnut was commencing to smoke,' and Rose Bordas sang the *Marseillaise*. Never had a singer given this song with such enthusiasm, such frenzy; to the workmen of the barricades she represented an incarnation of joyous liberty, and Tony Révillon, a Parisian poet of the day, wrote of her in glowing strains in the newspaper.

III

Then, alas! came quickly, one on the heels of the other, war, defeat, revolution, and siege, followed by the Commune and its devil's train. The foolish Montelaise, lost in it all as a bird in the tempest, intoxicated by the smoke, the whirl, the favour of the populace, sang to them "Marianne" like a little demon. She would have sung in the water—still better in the fire.

One day a riot surrounded her in the street and carried her off like a straw to the palace of the Tuileries.

The reigning populace were giving a fête in the Imperial salon. Arms, black with powder, seized "Marianne"—for Madame Bordas was Marianne to them—and mounted her on the throne in the midst of red flags.

"Sing to us," they cried, "the last song that shall echo round the walls of this accursed palace."

And the little Montelaise, with a red cap on her fair hair, sang—"La Canaille."

A formidable cry of "Long live the Republic!" followed the last refrain, and a solitary voice, lost in the crowd, sang out in answer, "Vivo Sant Gènt."

Rose could not see for the tears which brimmed in her blue eyes and she became pale as death.

"Open, give her air!" they cried, seeing that she was about to faint.

Ah no! poor Rose, it was not air she needed, it was Monteux, it was Saint Gent in the mountains and the innocent joy of the fêtes of Provence.

The crowd, in the meanwhile, with its red flags went off shouting through the open door.

Over Paris, louder and louder, thundered the cannonade, sinister noises ran along the streets, prolonged fusillades were heard in the distance, the smell of petroleum was overpowering, and before very long tongues of fire mounted from the Tuileries up to the sky.

Poor little Montelaise! No one ever heard of her again.

(*Almanach Provençal*, 1873.)

THE POPULAR MAN

The Mayor of Gigognan invited me, last year, to his village festivity. We had been for seven years comrades of the ink-horn at the school of Avignon, but since then had never met.

"By the blessing of God," he cried on seeing

me, "thou art just the same, lively as a blue-bottle, handsome as a new penny—straight as an arrow—I would have known thee in a thousand."

"Yes, I am just the same," I replied, "only my sight is a little shorter, my temples a little wrinkled, my hair a little whitened, and—when there is snow on the hills, the valleys are seldom hot."

"Bah!" said he, "my dear boy, the old bull runs on a straight track, only he who desires it grows old. Come, come to dinner."

According to time-honoured custom a village fête in Provence is the occasion for real feasting, and my friend Lassagne had not failed to prepare such a lordly feast as one might set before a king. Dressed lobster, fresh trout from the Sorgue, nothing but fine meats and choice wines, a little glass to whet the appetite at intervals, besides liqueurs of all sorts, and to wait on us at table a young girl of twenty who—I will say no more!

We had arrived at the dessert, when all at once we heard in the street the cheering buzz of the tambourine. The youth of the place had come, according to custom, to serenade the mayor.

"Open the door, Françonnette," cried the worthy man. "Go fetch the hearth-cakes and come, rinse out the glasses."

Mistral and his dog Pan-Perdu.

In the meanwhile the musicians banged away at their tambourines. When they had finished, the leaders of the party with flowers in their button-holes entered the room together with the town-clerk proudly carrying high on a pole the prizes prepared for the games, and followed by the dancers of the *farandole* and a crowd of girls.

The glasses were filled with the good wine of Alicante. All the cavaliers, each one in his turn, cut a slice of cake, and clicked glasses all round to the health of his Worship the Mayor. Then his Worship the Mayor, when all had drunk and joked for a while, addressed them thus :

" My children, dance as much as you like, amuse yourselves as much as you can, and be courteous to all strangers. You have my permission to do anything you like, except fight or throw stones."

" Long live Monsieur Lassagne ! " cried the young people. They went off and the *farandole* commenced. When we were alone again I inquired of my friend :

" How long is it that thou hast been Mayor of Gigognan ? "

" Fifty years, my dear fellow."

" Seriously ? Fifty years ? "

" Yes, yes, it is fifty years. I have seen eleven governments, my boy, and I do not intend to die,

if the good God helps me, until I have buried another half-dozen."

"But how hast thou managed to keep thy sash * amidst so much confusion and revolution?"

"Eh! my good friend, there is the asses' bridge. The people, the honest folk, require to be led. But in order to lead them it is necessary to have the right method. Some say drive with the rein tight. Others, drive with the rein loose; but I—do you know what I say?—take them along gaily."

Look at the shepherds; the good shepherds are not those who have always a raised stick; neither are they those that lie down beneath a willow and sleep in the corner of the field. The good shepherd is he who walks quietly ahead of his flock and plays the pipes. The beasts who feel themselves free, and who are really so, browse with appetite on the pasture and the thistle. When they are satisfied and the hour comes to return home, the shepherd pipes the retreat and the contented flock follow him to the sheepfold. My friend, I do the same, I play on the pipes, and my flock follow."

"Thou playest on the pipes; that is all very well . . . . But still, among thy flock thou hast

* The Mayor's sash of office.

some Whites, and some Reds, some headstrong and some queer ones, as there are everywhere! Now, when an election for a deputy takes place, for example, how dost thou manage?"

"How I manage? Eh, my good soul. I leave it alone. For to say to the Whites, 'Vote for the Republic,' would be to lose one's breath and one's Latin, and to say to the Reds, 'Vote for Henri V.,' would be as effectual as to spit on that wall."

"But the undecided ones, those who have no opinion, the poor innocents, all the good people who tack cautiously as the wind blows?"

"Ah, those there, when sometimes in the barber's shop they ask me my advice, 'Hold,' I say to them, 'Bassaquin is no better than Bassacan. Whether you vote for Bassaquin or Bassacan this summer you will have fleas. For Gigognan it is better to have a good rain than all the promises of the candidates. Ah! it would be a different matter if you nominated one of the peasant class. But so long as you do not nominate peasants for deputies, as they do in Sweden and Denmark, you will not be represented. The lawyers, doctors, journalists, small shopkeepers of all sorts whom you return, ask but one thing: to stay in Paris as much as possible, raking in all they can, and milking the poor cow without

troubling their heads about our Gigognan! But if, as I say, you delegated the peasants, they would think of saving, they would diminish the big salaries, they would never make war, they would increase the canals, they would abolish the duties, and hasten to settle affairs in order to return before the harvest. Just imagine that there are in France twenty million tillers of the soil, and they have not the sense to send three hundred of them to represent the land! What would they risk by trying it? It would be difficult for the peasants' deputy to do worse than these others!"

And every one replies: "Ah! that Monsieur Lassagne! though he is joking, there is some sense in what he says."

"But," I said, "as to thee personally, thee Lassagne, how hast thou managed to keep thy popularity in Gigognan, and thy authority for fifty years?"

"Oh, that is easy enough," he laughed. "Come, let us leave the table, and take a little turn. When we have made the tour of Gigognan two or three times, thou wilt know as much as I do."

We rose from the table, lit our cigars and went out to see the fun. In the road outside a game of bowls was going on. One of the players in throwing his ball unintentionally struck the mark,

replacing it by his own ball, and thus gaining two points.

"Clever rascal," cried Monsieur Lassagne, "that is something like play. My compliments, Jean-Claude! I have seen many a game of bowls but on my life never a better shot!"

We passed on. After a little we met two young girls.

"Now look at that," said Lassagne in a loud voice; "they are like two queens. What a pretty figure, what a lovely face! And those earrings of the last fashion! Those two are the flowers of Gigognan!"

The two girls turned their heads and smilingly greeted us. In crossing the square, we passed near an old man seated in front of his door.

"Well now, Master Quintrand," said Monsieur Lassagne, "shall we enter the lists this year with the first or second class of wrestlers?"

"Ah! my poor sir, we shall wrestle with no one at all," replied Master Quintrand.

"Do you remember Master Quintrand, the year when Meissonier, Guéquine, Rabasson, presented themselves on the meadow, the three best wrestlers of Provence, and you threw them on their shoulders, all three of them!"

"Eh, you don't need to remind me," said the old

wrestler, lighting up. "It was the year when they took the citadel of Antwerp. The prize was a hundred crowns and a sheep for the second winner. The prefect of Avignon shook me by the hand! The people of Bédarride were ready to fight with those of Courtezon, on my account. . . . Ah! what a time, compared with the present! Now their wrestling will . . . Better not speak of it, for one no longer sees men, not men, dear sir. . . . Besides, they have an understanding with each other."

We shook hands with the old man and continued our walk.

"Come now," I said to Lassagne, "I begin to understand—it is done with the soap ball!"

"I have not finished yet," he made answer.

Just then the village priest came out of his presbytery.

"Good day, gentlemen!"

"Good day, Monsieur le Curé," said Lassagne. "Ah, one moment, since we have met I want to tell you: this morning at Mass, I noticed that our church is becoming too small, especially on fête days. Do you think it would be a mistake to attempt enlarging it?"

"On that point, Monsieur le Maire, I am of your opinion—it is true that on feast days one can scarcely turn round."

"Monsieur le Curé, I will see about it: at the first meeting of the Municipal Council I will put the question, and if the prefecture will come to our assistance——"

"Monsieur le Maire, I am delighted, and I can only thank you."

As we left the ramparts, we saw coming a flock of sheep taking up all the road. Lassagne called to the shepherd.

"Just at the sound of thy bells, I said, 'this must be Georges!' And I was not mistaken: what a pretty flock! what fine sheep! But how well you manage to feed them! I am sure that, taking one with another, they are not worth less than ten crowns each!"

"That is true certainly," replied Georges. "I bought them at the Cold Market this winter; nearly all had lambs, and they will give me a second lot I do believe."

"Not only a second lot, but such beasts as those could give you twins!"

"May God hear you! Monsieur Lassagne!"

We had hardly finished talking to the shepherd when we overtook an old woman gathering chicory in the ditches.

"'Hold, it is thou, Bérengère," said Lassagne, accosting her. "Now really from behind with thy red kerchief I took thee for Téréson, the

daughter-in-law of Cacha, thou art exactly like her ! "

" Me ! Oh Monsieur Lassagne, but think of it ! I am seventy years old ! "

" Oh come, come, from behind if thou couldst see thyself, thou hast no need of pity. I have seen worse baskets at the vintage ! "

" This Monsieur Lassagne, he must always have his joke," said the old woman, shaking with laughter ; and turning to me she added :

" Believe me, sir, it is not just a way of speaking, but this Monsieur Lassagne is the cream of men. He is friendly with all. He will chat, see you, with the smallest in the country even to the babies ! That is why he has been fifty years Mayor of Gigognan, and will be to the end of his days."

" Well, my friend," said Lassagne to me, " It is not I, is it, that have said it ! All of us like nice things, we like compliments, and we are all gratified by kind manners. Whether dealing with women, with kings, or with the people, he who would reign must please. And that is the secret of the Mayor of Gigognan.

(*Almanach Provençal*, 1883.)

CHAPTER XIV

JOURNEY TO LES SAINTES-MARIES

All my life I had heard of the Camargue and of Les Saintes-Maries and the pilgrimage to their shrine, but I had never as yet been there. In the spring of the year 1855 I wrote to my friend Mathieu, ever ready for a little trip, and proposed we should go together and visit the saints.

He agreed gladly, and we met at Beaucaire in the Condamine quarter, from where a pilgrim party annually started on May 24 to the sea-coast village of Les Saintes-Maries.

A little after midnight Mathieu and I set forth with a crowd of country men and women, young girls and children, packed into waggons close as sardines in a tin; we numbered fourteen in our conveyance.

Our worthy charioteer, one of those typical Provenceaux whom nothing dismays, seated us on the shaft, our legs dangling. Half the time he walked by the side of his horse, the whip round his neck, constantly relighting his pipe. When he wanted a rest he sat on a small seat niched in

between the wheels, which the drivers call "carrier of the weary."

Just behind me, enveloped in her woollen wrap and stretched on a mattress by her mother's side, her feet planted unconcernedly in my back, was a young girl named Alarde. Not having, however, as yet made the acquaintance of these near neighbours, Mathieu and I conversed with the driver, who at once inquired from whence we hailed. On our replying from Maillane, he remarked that he had already guessed by our speech that we had not travelled far.

"The Maillane drivers," he added, "'upset on a flat plain'; you know that saying?"

"Not all of them," we laughed.

"'Tis but a jest," he answered. "Why there was one I knew, a carter of Maillane, who was equipped, I give you my word, like Saint George himself—Ortolan, his name was."

"Was that many years ago?" I asked.

"Aye, sirs, I am speaking of the good old days of the wheel, before those devourers with their railroads had come and ruined us all: the days when the fair of Beaucaire was in its splendour, and the first barge which arrived for the fair was awarded the finest sheep in the market, and the victorious bargeman used to hang the sheep-skin

as a trophy on the main-mast. Those were the days in which the towing-horses were insufficient to tug up the Rhône the piles of merchandise which were sold at the fair of Beaucaire, and every man who drove a waggon, carriage, cart, or van was cracking his whip along the high roads from Marseilles to Paris, and from Paris to Lille, right away into Flanders. Ah, you are too young to remember that time."

Once launched on his pet theme Lamoureux discoursed, as he tramped along, till the light of the moon waned and gave place to dawn. Even then the worthy charioteer would have continued his reminiscences had it not been that, as the rays of the awakening sun lit up the wide stretches of the great plains of the Camargue lying between the delta of the two Rhônes, we arrived at the Bridge of Forks.

In our eyes, even a more beautiful sight than the rising sun (we were both about five and twenty) was the awakening maiden who, as I have mentioned already, had been packed in just behind us with her mother. Shaking off the hood of her cloak, she emerged all smiling and fresh, like a goddess of youth. A dark red ribbon caught up her blonde hair which escaped from the white coif. With her delicate clear skin, curved lips

half opened in a rapt smile, she looked like a flower shaking off the morning dew. We greeted her cordially, but Mademoiselle Alarde paid no attention to us. Turning to her mother she inquired anxiously :

" Mother, say—are we still far from the great saints ? "

" My daughter, we are still, I should say, eighteen or twenty miles distant."

" Will he be there, my betrothed ?—say then —will he be there ? " she asked her mother.

" Oh hush, my darling," answered the mother quickly.

" Ah, how slowly the time goes," sighed the young girl. Then discovering all at once that she was ravenously hungry, she suggested breakfast. Spreading a linen cloth on her knees, she and her mother thereupon brought out of a wicker basket a quantity of provisions—bread, sausage, dates, figs, oranges—and, without further ceremony, set to work. We wished them " good appetite," whereupon the young girl very charmingly invited us to join them, which we did on condition that we contributed the contents of our knapsacks to the repast. Mathieu at once produced two bottles of good Nerthe wine, which, having uncorked, we poured into a cup and handed round

to each of the party in turn, including the driver; so behold us a happy family.

At the first halt Mathieu and I got down to stretch our legs. We inquired of our friend Lamoureux who the young girl might be. He answered that hers was a sad story. One of the prettiest girls in Beaucaire, she had been jilted about three months ago by her betrothed, who had gone off to another girl, rich, but ugly as sin. The effect of this had been to send Alarde almost out of her mind; the beautiful girl was in fact not quite sane, declared Lamoureux, though to look at her one would never guess it. The poor mother, at her wits' end to know what to do, was taking her child to Les Saintes-Maries to see if that would divert her mind and perhaps cure her.

We expressed our astonishment that any man could be such a scoundrel as to forsake a young girl so lovely and sweet-looking.

Arrived at the Jasses d'Albaron, we halted to let the horses have a feed from their nose-bags. The young girls of Beaucaire who were with us took this opportunity of surrounding Alarde, and singing a roundel in her honour:

Au branle de ma tante
Le rossignol y chante
Oh que de roses! Oh que de fleurs
Belle, belle Alarde tournez vous.

La belle s'est tournée,
Son beau l'a regardé :
Oh que de roses ! Oh que de fleurs.
Belle, belle Alarde, embrassez vous.

But the result of this well-meant attention was very disastrous, for the poor Alarde burst out into hysterical laughter, crying, " My lover, my lover," as though she were demented.

Soon after, however, we resumed our journey, for the sky, which since dawn had been flecked with clouds, became every moment more threatening. The wind blew straight from the sea, sweeping the black masses of cloud towards us till all the bue sky was obliterated. The frogs and toads croaked in the marshes, and our long procession of waggons struggled slowly through the vast salt plains of the Camargue. The earth felt the coming storm. Flights of wild ducks and teal passed with a warning cry over our heads. The women looked anxiously at the black sky. " We shall be in a nice plight if that storm takes us in the middle of the Camargue," said they.

" Well, you must put your skirts over your heads," laughed Lamoureux. " It is a known fact that such clouds bring rain."

We passed a mounted bull-driver, his trident in

his hand, collecting his scattered beasts. "You'll get wet," he prophesied cheerfully.

A drizzle commenced; then larger drops announced that the water was going to fall in good earnest. In no time the wide plain was converted into a watery waste. Seated beneath the awning of the waggon, we saw in the distance troops of the Camargue horses shaking their long manes and tails as they started off briskly for the rising grounds and the sandbanks.

Down came the rain! The road, drowned in the deluge, became impracticable. The wheels got clogged, the beasts were unable to drag us further. Far as the eye could reach there was nothing to be seen but one vast lake.

"All must get down!" cried the drivers unanimously. "Women and girls too, if you do not wish to sleep beneath the tamarisk-bush."

"Walk in the water?" cried some in dismay.

"Walk barefoot, my dears," answered Lamoureux; "thus you will earn the great pardon of which you all have need, for I know the sins of some of you are weighing devilish heavy."

Old and young, women and girls, all got down, and with laughter and shrieks, every one began to prepare themselves for wading, taking off their shoes and tucking up their clothes. The drivers

took the children astride on their shoulders, and Mathieu gallantly offered himself to the old lady in our waggon, the mother of the pretty Alarde :

" If you mount on my back," he said, " I will undertake to carry you safely to the ' Dead Goat.' " The old lady, who was so fat she walked with difficulty even on dry ground, did not refuse such a noble offer.

" You, my Frédéric, can charge yourself with Alarde," said Mathieu with a wink to me, " and we will change from time to time to refresh ourselves, eh ? "

And forthwith we each took up our burden without further ceremony, an example which was soon followed by all the young men in the other waggons.

Mathieu and his old girl laughed like fools. As for myself, when I felt the soft round arms of Alarde round my neck as she held the umbrella over our heads, I own it to this day, I would not have given up that journey across the Camargue in the rain and slush for a king's ransom.

" Oh goodness, if my betrothed could see me now," repeated Alarde at intervals ; " my betrothed, who no longer loves me—my boy, my handsome boy ! "

It was in vain that I tried to steal in with my

little compliments and soft speeches, she neither heard nor saw me—but I could feel her breath on my neck and shoulder ; I had only to turn my head a little and I could have kissed her, her hair brushed against mine ; the close proximity of this youth and freshness bewitched me, and while she dreamt only of her lover, I, for my part, tried to imagine myself a second Paul carrying my Virginia.

Just at the happiest moment of my illusion, Mathieu, gasping beneath the weight of the fat mamma, cried out :

" Let us change for a bit ! I can go no further, my dear fellow."

At the trunk of a tamarisk, therefore, we halted and exchanged burdens, Mathieu taking the daughter, while I, alas, had the mother. And thus for over two miles, paddling in water up to our knees, we travelled, changing at intervals and making light of fatigue because of the reward we both got out of the romantic *rôle* of Paul !

At last the heavy rain began to abate, the sky to clear and the roads to become visible. We remounted the waggons, and about four o'clock in the afternoon, suddenly we saw rise out of the distant blue of sea and sky, with its Roman belfry, russet merlons and buttresses, the church of Les Saintes-Maries.

There was a general exclamation of joyful greeting to the great saints, for this far-away shrine, standing isolated on the edge of the great plain, is the Mecca of all the Gulf of Lyons. What impresses one most is the harmonious grandeur of the vast sweep of land and sea, arched over by the limitless dome of sky, which, more perfectly here than anywhere else, appears to embrace the entire terrestrial horizon.

Lamoureux turned to us saying: "We shall just arrive in time to perform the office of lowering the shrines; for, gentlemen, you must know that it is we of Beaucaire to whom is reserved the right before all others of turning the crane by which the relics of the saints are lowered."

The sacred remains of Mary, mother of James the Less, Mary Salome, mother of James and John, and of Sarah, their servant, are kept in a small chapel high up just under the dome. From this elevated position, by means of an aperture which gives on to the church, the shrines are slowly lowered by a rope over the heads of the worshipping crowd.

So soon as we had unharnessed, which we did on the sandbanks covered with tamarisk and orach by which the village is surrounded, we made our way quickly to the church.

"Light them up well, the dear blessed saints," cried a group of Montpellier women selling candles and tapers, medals and images at the church door.

The church was crammed with people of all kinds, from Languedoc, from Arles, the maimed and the halt, together with a crowd of gypsies, all one on the top of the other. The gypsies buy bigger candles than anybody else, but devote their attention exclusively to Saint Sarah, who, according to their belief, was one of their nation. It is here at Les Saintes-Maries that these wandering tribes hold their annual assemblies, and from time to time elect their queen.

It was difficult to get in at the church. A group of market women from Nîmes, muffled up in black and dragging after them their twill cushions whereon to sleep all night in the church, were quarrelling for the chairs. "I had this before you."—"No, but I hired it," &c. A priest was passing "The Sacred Arm" from one to the other to be kissed; to the sick people they were giving glasses of briny water drawn from the saints' well in the middle of the nave, and which on that day they say becomes sweet. Some, by way of a remedy, were scraping the dust off an ancient marble block fixed in the wall, and reported to be

the " saints' pillow." A smell of burning tapers, incense, heat and stuffiness suffocated one, while one's ears were deafened by each group singing their own particular canticles at the pitch of their voices.

Then in the air, slowly the shrines begin to descend, and the crowd bursts into shouts and cries of " O great Saint Marys ! " And as the cord unrolls, screams and contortions increase, arms are raised, faces upturned, every one awaits a miracle. Suddenly, from the end of the church, rushing across the nave, as though she had wings, a beautiful girl, her fair hair falling about her, flung herself towards the floating shrines, crying : " O great saints—in pity give me back the love of my betrothed."

All rose to their feet. " It is Alarde ! " exclaimed the people from Beaucaire, while the rest murmured awestruck, " It is Saint Mary Magdalen come to visit her sisters." Every one wept with emotion.

The following day took place the procession on the sea-shore to the soft murmur and splash of the breaking waves. In the distance, on the high seas, two or three ships tacked about as though coming in, while all along the coast extended the long procession, ever seeming to lengthen out with the moving line of the waves.

It was just here, says the legend,* that the three Saint Marys in their skiff were cast ashore in Provence after the death of Our Lord. And looking out over the wide glistening sea, that lies in the midst of such visions and memories, illuminated by the radiant sunshine, it seemed to us in truth we were on the threshold of Paradise.

Our little friend Alarde, looking rather pale after the emotions of the previous day, was one of a group of maidens chosen to bear on their shoulders the "Boat of the Saints," and many murmurs of sympathy followed her as she passed. This was the last we saw of her, for, so soon as the saints had reascended to their chapel, we took the omnibus for Aigues-Mortes, together with a crowd of people returning to Montpellier and Lundy, who beguiled the way by singing in chorus hymns to the Saints of the Sea.

STANZAS FROM "MIREILLE"†

The sisters and the brothers, we
Who followed him ever constantly,

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* Mistral has glorified this legend in his *Mireille*, where the saints appear to the young girl and recount to her their Odyssey (pp. 427–437, *Mireille*).—C. E. M.

† For Provençal text *see* p. 324.

To the raging sea were cruelly driven
In a crazy ship without a sail,
Without an oar, 'mid the angry gale ;
We women could only weep and wail—
The men uplifted their eyes to Heaven !

A gust tempestuous drives the ship
O'er fearsome waves, in the wild storm's grip ;
Martial and Saturninus, lowly
In prayer kneel yonder on the prow ;
Old Trophimus with thoughtful brow
Sits closely wrapped in his mantle now
By Maximus, the Bishop holy.

There on the deck, amid the gloom,
Stands Lazarus, of shroud and tomb
Always the mortal pallor keeping ;
His glance the raging gulf defies ;
And with the doomed ship onward flies
Martha his sister ; there, too, lies
Magdalen, o'er her sorrows weeping.

Upon a smooth and rockless strand
Alleluiah ! our ship doth land.
Prostrate we fall on the wet sand, crying :
" Our lives, that He from storm did save
Here are they ready, Death to brave,
And preach the law that once He gave,
O Christ, we swear it, even dying ! "

At that glad name, most glorious still,
Noble Provence seemed all a-thrill ;

Forest and moor throughout their being
Were stirred and answered that new cry;
As when a dog, his master nigh,
Goes out to meet him joyfully,
And welcome gives, the master seeing.

The sea some shells to shore had cast . . .
Thou gav'st a feast to our long fast—
Our Father, Thou who art in Heaven;
And for our thirst, a fountain clear
Rose limpid 'mid the sea-plants here;
And, marvellous, still rises near
The church where we were burial given.

(Trans. Alma Strettell.)

CHAPTER XV

JEAN ROUSSIÈRE

"Good morning, Mr. Frédéric. They tell me that you have need of a man on the farm."

"Yes—from whence comest thou?"

"From Villeneuve, the country of the 'lizards'—near to Avignon."

"And what canst thou do?"

"A little of everything. I have been helper at the oil mills, muleteer, carrier, labourer, miller, shearer, mower if necessary, wrestler on occasions, pruner of poplars, a high-class trade, and even cleaner of sewers, which is the lowest of all!"

"And they call thee?"

"Jean Roussière, and Rousseyron—and Seyron for short."

"How much do you ask?—it is for taking care of the beasts."

"About fifteen louis."

"I will give thee a hundred crowns."

"All right for a hundred crowns."

That is how I engaged Jean Roussière, he who taught me the old folk-melody of "Magali"—

a jovial fellow and made on the lines of a Hercules. The last year that I lived at the farm, with my blind father, in the long watches of our solitude Jean Roussière never failed to keep me interested and amused, good fellow that he was. At his work he was excellent and always enlivened his beasts by some cheering song.

Naturally artistic in all he did, even if it was heaping a rick of straw or a pile of manure, or stowing away a cargo, he knew how to give the harmonious line or, as they say, the graceful sweep. But he had the defects of his qualities and was rather too fond of taking life in an easy and leisurely fashion, even passing part of it in an afternoon nap.

A charming talker at all times, it was worth hearing him as he spoke of the days when he led the big teams of horses on the towing-path, tugging the barges up the Rhône to Valence and to Lyons.

"Just fancy!" he said, "at the age of twenty, I led the finest turn-out on the banks of the Rhône! A turn-out of twenty-four stallions, four abreast, dragging six barges! Ah, what fine mornings those were, when we set out on the banks of the big river and silently, slowly, this fleet moved up the stream!"

And Jean Roussière would enumerate all the

places on the two banks ; the inns, the hostesses, the streams, the sluices, the roads and the fords from Arles to the Revestidou, from the Coucourde to the Ermitage. But his greatest happiness and triumph was at the feast of Saint-Eloi.

" I will show your Maillanais," he said, " if they have not already seen it, how we ride a little mule ! "

Saint-Eloi is, in Provence, the feast of the agriculturists. All over Provence on that day the village priests bless the cattle, asses, mules and horses ; and the people owning the beasts partake of the " blessed bread," that excellent " blessed bread " flavoured with aniseed and yellow with eggs, which they call *tortillarde*. At Maillane it was our custom on that day to deck a chariot with green boughs and harness to it forty or fifty beasts, caparisoned as in the time of the tournaments, with beards, embroidered saddle-cloths, plumes, mirrors and crescents of brass. The whip was put up to auction, that is to say, the office of Prior was put up to public auction :

" Thirty francs for the whip !—a hundred francs !—two hundred francs ! Once—twice—thrice ! "

The presidency of the feast fell to the highest bidder. The chariot of green boughs led the

procession, a cavalcade of joyful labourers, each one walking proudly near his own horse or mule, and cracking his whip. In the chariot, accompanied by the musicians playing the tambourine and flute, the Prior was seated. On the mules, fathers placed their little ones astride, the latter holding on happily to the trappings. The horses' collars were all ornamented with a cake of the blessed bread, in the form of a crown, and a pennon in paper bearing a picture of Saint-Eloi ; and carried on the shoulders of the Priors of the past years was an image of the saint, in full glory, like a golden bishop, the crozier in his hand.

Drawn by the fifty mules or donkeys round the village rolled the chariot, in a cloud of dust, with the farm labourers running like mad by the side of their beasts, all in their shirt sleeves, hats at the back of their heads, a belt round the waist, and low shoes.

That year Jean Roussière, mounting our mule Falette, astonished the spectators. Light as a cat, he jumped on the animal, then off again, remounted, now sitting on one side, now standing upright on the crupper, there in turn doing the goose step, the forked tree and the frog, on the mule's back—in short, giving a sort of Arab horseman's performance.

But where he shone with even greater lustre was at the supper of Saint-Eloi, for after the chariot procession the Priors give a feast. Every one having eaten and drunk their fill and said grace, Roussière rose and addressed the company.

" Comrades ! Here you are, a crowd of good-for-nothings and rascals, who have kept the Saint-Eloi for the past thousand years, and yet I will wager none of you know the history of your great patron."

The company confessed that all they had heard was that their saint had been a blacksmith.

" Yes, but I am going to tell you how he became a saint." And while soaking a crisp *tortillarde* in his glass of Tavel wine, the worthy Roussière proceeded :

" Our Lord God the Father, one day in Paradise, wore a troubled air. The child Jesus inquired of him :

" ' What is the matter, my Father ? '

" ' I have,' replied God, ' a case that greatly plagues me. Hold, look down there ! '

" ' Where ? ' asked Jesus.

" ' Down there, in the Limousin, to the right of my finger : thou seest, in that village, near the city, a smithy, a large fine smithy ? '

" ' I see—I see.'

" ' Well, my son, there is a man that I should like to have saved : they call him Master Eloi. He is a reliable, good fellow, a faithful observer of my Commandments, charitable to the poor, kind-hearted to every one, of exemplary conduct, hammering away from morning to night without evil speaking or blasphemy. Yes, he seems to me worthy to become a great saint.'

" ' And what prevents it ? ' asked Jesus.

" ' His pride, my son. Because he is a good worker, a worker of the first order, Eloi thinks that no one on earth is above him, and presumption is perdition.'

" ' My Lord Father,' said Jesus, ' if you will permit me to descend to the earth I will try and convert him.'

" ' Go, my dear son.'

" And the good Jesus descended. Dressed like an apprentice, his tool-bag on his back, the divine workman alighted right in the street where Eloi dwelt. Over the blacksmith's door was the usual signboard, and on it this inscription :

" ' Eloi the blacksmith, master above all other masters, forges a shoe in two heatings.'

" The little apprentice stepped on to the threshold and taking off his hat :

" ' God give you good-day, master, and to

the company,' said he; 'have you need of any help?'

"'Not for the moment,' answered Eloi.

"'Farewell then, master: it will be for another time.'

"And the good Jesus continued his road. In the street he saw a group of men talking, and Jesus said in passing:

"'I should not have thought that in such a smithy, where there must be, one would think, so much doing, they would refuse me work.'

"'Wait a bit, my lad,' said one of the neighbours. 'What salutation did you make to Master Eloi!'

"'I said, as is usual, "God give you good-day, master, and to the company!'

"'Ah, but that is not what you should have said. You should have addressed him as, "Master above all other masters." There, look at the board!'

"'That is true,' said Jesus. 'I will try again.' And with that he returned to the smithy.

"'God give you good-day, master above all other masters. Have you no need of an apprentice?'

"'Come in, come in,' replied Eloi. 'I have been thinking that we could give you work also.

But listen to this once and for all: When you address me, you must say, "Master, above all other masters," see you—this is not to boast, but men like me, who can forge a shoe in two heatings, there are not two in Limousin!'

"'Oh,' replied the apprentice, 'in our country, we do it with one heating!'

"'Only one heating! Go to, boy, be silent then—why the thing is not possible.'

"'Very well, you shall see, master above all other masters!'

"Jesus took a piece of iron, threw it into the forge, blew, made up the fire, and when the iron was red—red, and incandescent—he took it out with his hand.

"'Oh—poor simpleton!' the head apprentice cried to him, 'thou wilt scorch thy fingers!'

"'Have no fear!' answered Jesus. 'Thanks to God, in our country we have no need of pincers.' And the little workman seizes with his hand the iron heated to white heat, carries it to the anvil, and with his hammer, pif, paf, in the twinkle of an eye, stretches it, flattens it, rounds it and stamps it so well that one would have said it was cast.

"'Oh, I, too,' said Master Eloi, 'I could do that if I wanted to.'

"He then takes a piece of iron, throws it in the

forge, blows, makes up the fire, and when the iron is red hot, goes to take it as his apprentice had done and carry it to the anvil—but he burns his fingers badly! In vain he tried to hurry, to harden himself to endure the burn, he was forced to let go his hold and run for the pincers. In the meantime the shoe for the horse grew cold—and only a few sparks burnt out. Ah! poor Master Eloi, he might well hammer, and put himself in a sweat—to do it with one heating was impossible.

"'But listen,' said the apprentice, 'I seem to hear the gallop of a horse.'

"Master Eloi at once stalked to the door and sees a cavalier, a splendid cavalier, drawing up at the smithy. Now this was Saint-Martin.

"'I come a long way,' he said, 'my horse has lost a shoe, and I am in a great hurry to find a blacksmith.'

"Master Eloi bridled up.

"'My lord,' said he, "you could not have chanced better. You have come to the first blacksmith of Limousin—of Limousin and of France, who may well call himself "master of all the masters," and who forges a shoe in two heats. Here lad, hold the horse's hoof,' he called.

"'Hold the hoof!' cried Jesus. 'In our country we do not find that necessary.'

"'Well, what next,' cried the master blacksmith, 'that is a little too much! And how can one shoe a horse, in your country, without holding the hoof?'

"'But faith, nothing is easier, as you shall see.'

"And so saying, the young man seized a knife, went up to the horse, and crack! cut off the hoof. He carried it into the smithy, fastened it in the vice, carefully heated the hoof, fastened on the new shoe that he had just made; with the shoeing hammer he knocked in the nails, then loosening the vice, returned the foot to the horse, spat on it and fitted it, saying, as he made the sign of the Cross, 'May God grant that the blood dries up,' and there was the foot finished, shod and healed as no one had ever seen before and as no one will ever see again.

"The first apprentice opened his eyes wide as the palm of your hand, while Master Eloi's assistants began to perspire.

"'Ho,' said Eloi at last, 'my faith, but I will do it like that—do it just as well.'

"He sets himself to the task. Knife in hand he approaches the horse, and crack! he cuts off the foot, carries it into the smithy, fastens it into the

vice, and shoes it at his ease, just like the young apprentice.

"But then came the hitch, he must put it back in place. He approaches the horse, spits on the shoe, applies it to the fetlock as best he can. Alas! the salve does not stick, the blood flows, and the foot falls! Then was the proud soul of Master Eloi illuminated: and he went back into the smithy there to prostrate himself at the feet of the young apprentice. But Jesus had disappeared, and also the horse and the cavalier. Tears gushed from the eyes of Master Eloi; he recognised, poor man, that there was a master above him, and above all. Throwing aside his apron he left the forge and went out into the world to teach the word of the Lord Jesus."

Great applause followed the conclusion of this legend, applause both for Saint-Eloi and for Jean Roussière.

Before I leave the worthy Jean I must mention that it was he who sang to me the popular air to which I put the serenade of Magali, an air so sweet, so melodious, that many regretted not finding it in Gounod's opera of *Mireille*. The only person in all the world that I ever heard sing that particular air was Jean Roussière, who was apparently

the last to retain it. It was a strange coincidence that he should come, by chance as it were, and sing it to me, at the moment when I was looking for the Provençal note of my love-song, and thus enable me to save it just at the moment when, like so many other things, it was about to be relegated to oblivion.

The name of Magali, an abbreviation of Marguerite, I heard one day as I was returning home from Saint-Rémy. A young shepherdess was tending a flock of sheep along the Grande Roubine. "Oh! Magali, art not coming yet?" cried a boy to her as he passed by. The limpid name struck me as so pretty that at once I sang:

MAGALI.*

"O Magali, belovèd maid,
Forth from thy casement lean!
And listen to my serenade
Of viols and tambourine."

"Were ever stars so many seen!
The wind to rest is laid;
But when thy face thou shalt unveil,
These stars shall pale!"

"So as for rustling leaves, I care
For this thy roundelay!
I'll turn into an eel, and fare
To the blonde sea away!"

* For Provençal text *see* p. 326.

"O Magali, if thou wilt play
At turning fish, beware!
For I the fisherman will be
And fish for thee."

"Oh, and if thou thy nets would'st fling
As fisherman, then stay!
I'll be a bird upon the wing,
And o'er the moors away."

"O Magali, and would'st thou stray,
A wild bird wandering?
I'll take my gun and speedily
Give chase to thee."

"For partridge or for warbler's breed
If thou thy snares would'st lay,
Upon the vast and flowery mead
As flower I'll hide away."

"O Magali, if thou a spray
Of blossom art indeed,
The limpid brook then I will be
And water thee."

"And if thou art the limpid brook,
I'll be a cloud, and heigh!
I shall be gone, ere thou can'st look,
To far Americay!"

"O Magali, and though the way
To furthest Ind you took,
I'd make myself the wind at sea
And carry thee."

"Wert thou the wind, by some device
I'd fly another way;
I'd be the shaft, that melts the ice,
From the great orb of day."

"O Magali, wert thou a ray
Of sunshine—in a trice
The emerald lizard I would be,
And drink in thee."

"And wert thou, hidden 'mid the fern,
A salamander—nay,
I'd be the full moon, that doth turn,
For witches, night to day."

"O Magali, would'st thou essay
To be the moon, I'd learn
A soft and silver mist to be
Enfolding thee."

"But though the mist enfold, not so
Shalt thou me yet waylay!
For I a pure, fair rose shall grow
And 'mid my branches sway."

"O Magali, and though you may
Be loveliest rose, yet know
That I the butterfly shall be
Which kisseth thee."

"Go to! pursuer, thou'lt not win,
Though thou should'st run for aye;
For in some forest oak's rough skin
I will myself array."

"O Magali, though thou grow grey
The doleful tree within,
A branch of ivy will I be
Embracing thee."

"And if thou dost, thou wilt embrace
Only an oak's decay,
For in the convent of Saint-Blaise,
A White Nun, I will pray."

"O Magali, when comes that day,
There in the holy place
Father Confessor will I be,
And hark to thee."

"Pass but the gate, and in my stead
Thou wilt find, well-a-day!
The nuns all sadly busièd
Me in my shroud to lay."

"O Magali, and if cold clay
Thou make thyself, and dead,
Earth I'll become, and there thou'lt be,
At last, for me."

"I half begin to think, in sooth,
Thou speakest earnestly!
Then take my ring of glass, fair youth,
In memory of me."

"Thou healest me, O Magali!
And mark how, of a truth,
The stars, since thou did'st drop thy veil,
Have all grown pale!"

(Trans. Alma Strettell.)

It was in the autumn of this year 1855 that the first cloud overshadowed my happy youth. It was the sorrow of losing my father. He had become quite blind, and as far back as the previous Christmas we had been anxious about him. For on that occasion he whom the festival had always filled with joy, this year seemed overcome by a deep depression which we felt augured badly for the future. It was in vain that as usual we lit the three sacred candles and spread the table with the three white cloths ; in vain that I offered him the mulled wine, hoping to hear from his lips the sacramental " Good cheer." Groping, alas ! with his long thin arms, he seated himself with never a word. In vain also my mother tried to tempt him with the dishes of Christmas, one after the other—the plate of snails, the fish of Martique, the almond nougat, the cake of oil. Wrapt in pensive thought the poor old man supped in silence. A shadow, a forerunner of death, was over him, and his blindness oppressed him. Once he looked up and spoke.

" Last year at Christmas I could still see the light of the candles ; but this year, nothing, nothing. Help me, O blessed Virgin."

In the first days of September he departed this life. Having received the last sacrament with

sincerity and faith, the strong faith of simple souls, he turned to his family, who all stood weeping around his bed :

" Come, come, my children," he said to us. " I am going—and to God I give thanks for all that I owe him : my long life and my labour, which He has blessed."

Then he called me to him and asked :

" Frédéric, what sort of weather is it ? "

" It rains, my father," I replied.

" Ah well," he said, " if it rains it is good for the seeds."

Then he gave up his soul to God. I can never forget that moment ! They covered his head with the sheet, and near the bed, that big bed in the white alcove where in broad daylight I had been born, they lit a long pale taper. The shutters of the room were half closed. The labourers were ordered to unyoke at once. The maid, in the kitchen, turned over the cauldrons and pots on the dresser.

Around the ashes of the fire, which had been extinguished, we seated ourselves in a silent circle, my mother at the corner of the big chimney, bearing, according to the custom of the widows of Provence, as sign of mourning, a white fichu on her head. And all day the neighbours, men and

Thérèse Roumanille (Madame Boissière),
2nd Queen of the Félibres.

women, relations and friends, came to offer us their sympathy, greeting us one after another with the customary " May our Lord preserve you ! "

And lengthily, piously, they went through the condolences in honour of the " poor master."

The next day all Maillane assisted at the funeral ceremony ; and in their prayers for him, the poor added always :

" God grant that as many angels may accompany him to heaven as he has given us loaves of bread ! "

The coffin was borne by hand with cloths, the lid off in order that for the last time the people might see him with crossed hands in his white shroud. Behind walked Jean Roussière carrying the wax taper which had watched over his master.

As for me, while the passing-bell sounded in the distance, I went to weep alone in the fields, for the tree of the house had fallen. The Mas du Juge, the home of my childhood, was now desolate and deserted in my eyes as though it had lost its guardian spirit. The head of the family, Master François my father, had been the last of the patriarchs of Provence, a faithful preserver of traditions and customs, and the last, at least for me, of that austere generation, religious, humble, and self-

controlled, who had patiently gone through the miseries and convulsions of the Revolution, giving to France the disinterested devotion which flamed up in her great holocausts, and the indefatigable service of her big armies.

One week later the division of property took place. The farm produce and the "stacks," the horses, oxen, sheep, poultry—all were divided into lots. The furniture, our dear old things, the big four-poster beds, the kneading-trough of iron-work, the meal-chest, the polished wardrobes, the carved kneading-trough, the table, the mirror, all which, ever since my childhood, I had seen as a part of my home life, the rows of plates, the painted china, which never left the shelves of the dresser, the sheets of hemp that my mother herself had woven; agricultural implements, waggons, ploughs, harness, tools, utensils of every kind—all these were collected and set out on the threshing-floor of the farm, to be divided in three divisions by an expert. The servants, hired either by the year or the month, left one after the other. And to the paternal farm,* which was not in my division, I had to say good-bye.

One afternoon, with my mother and the dog,

* The elder half-brother of Frédéric Mistral inherited the Mas du Juge.

and Jean Roussière who acted as charioteer, we departed with heavy hearts, to dwell henceforth in the house at Maillane which in the division had fallen to me.

It was from personal experience I could write later on in *Mireille* of home-sickness :

> Comme au mas, comme au temps de mon pére,
> hélas ! hélas !

CHAPTER XVI

"MIREILLE"

THE following year (1856), at the time of the fête of Sainte-Agathe, patroness of Maillane, I received a visit from a well-known poet in Paris. Fate, or rather the good star of the Félibres, brought him just in the propitious hour. It was Adolphe Dumas—a fine figure of a man some fifty years old, of an æsthetic pallor, with long hair turning grey and a brown moustache like a lap-dog. His black eyes were full of fire, and he had a habit of accompanying his ringing voice with a fine waving gesture of the hand. He was tall, but lame, dragging a crippled leg as he walked. He reminded one of a cypress of Provence agitated by the wind.

"Is it you, then, Monsieur Mistral, who write verses in the Provençal?" he began to me in a joking tone as he held out his hand.

"Yes, it is I," I replied. "At your service, Monsieur."

"Certainly, I hope that you can serve me. The Minister for Public Instruction, Monsieur Fortoul, of Digne, has given me the commission

to come and collect the popular songs of Provence, such as 'Le Mousse de Marseille,' 'La Belle Margoton,' 'Les Noces du Papillon,' and if you know of any, I am here to collect them."

And talking over this matter I sang to him, as it happened, the serenade of Magali, freshly arranged for the poem of *Mireille*.

Adolphe Dumas started up all alert.

"But where did you find that pearl?" he cried.

"It is part," I answered, "of a Provençal poem in twelve cantos to which I am just giving the finishing touches."

"Oh, these good Provencaux!" he laughed. "You are always the same, determined to keep your tattered language, like the donkeys who will walk along the borders of the roads to graze upon thistles. It is in French, my dear friend, it is in the language of Paris that we must sing of our Provence to-day if we wish to be heard. Now, listen to this:

"J'ai revu sur mon roc, vieille, nue, appauvrie,
La maison des parents, la première patrie,
L'ombre du vieux mûrier, le banc de pierre étroit,
Le nid de l'hirondelle avait au bord du toit,
Et la treille, à présent sur les murs égarée,
Qui regrette son maître et retombe éplorée;
Et dans l'herbe et l'oubli qui poussent sur le seuil,
J'ai fait pieusement agenouiller l'orgueil,

J'ai rouvert la fenêtre ou me vint la lumière,
Et j'ai rempli de chants la couche de ma mère ! "

"But come, tell me, since poem there is, tell me something of your Provençal production."

I then read him something out of *Mireille*, I forget what.

"Ah ! if you are going to talk like that," said Dumas after my recitation, "I take off my hat and greet the source of a new poetry, of an indigenous poetry hitherto unknown. It teaches me, who have left Provence for thirty years, and who thought her language dead, that behind this dialect used by the common people, the half-*bourgeois* and the half-ladies, there exists a second language, that of Dante and Petrarch. But take care to follow their methods, which did not consist, as some think, in using the language as they found it, or in making a mixture of the dialects of Florence, Bologna and Milan. They collected the oil and then constructed a language which they made perfect while generalising it. All who preceded the Latin writers of the great time of Augustus, with the exception of Terence, were but trash. Of the popular tongue, use only a few white straws with the grain that may be there. I feel certain that you have the requisite sap running in your youthful veins to ensure success. Already I

begin to see the possibility of the rebirth of a language founded upon Latin, which shall be beautiful and sonorous as the best Italian."

The story of Adolphe Dumas was like a fairy-tale. Born of the people, his parents kept a little inn between Orgon and Cabane. Dumas had a sister named Laura, beautiful as the day and innocent as a spring of fresh water. One day, lo and behold, some strolling players passed through the village, and gave in the evening a performance at the little inn. One of them played the part of a prince. The gold tinsel of his costume glittering beneath the big lanterns gave him, in the eyes of poor little Laura, the appearance of a king's son. Innocent, alas! as many a one before, Laura allowed herself, so the story goes, to be beguiled and carried off by this prince of the open road. She travelled with the company and embarked at Marseilles. Too soon she learnt her mad mistake, and not daring to return home, in desperation she took the coach for Paris, where she arrived one morning in torrents of rain. There she found herself on the street, alone and destitute. A gentleman, driving past, noticed the young Provençale in tears. Stopping his carriage he asked her: "My pretty

child, what is the matter—why do you weep so bitterly ?"

In her naïve way Laura told him her story. The gentleman, who was rich, suddenly touched and taken with her beauty and simplicity, made her get into his carriage, took her to a convent, had her carefully educated, and then married her. But the beautiful bride, who had a noble heart, did not forget her own relations. She sent for her little brother Adolphe to Paris, and gave him a good education, and that is how Adolphe Dumas, a poet by nature and an enthusiast, one day found himself in the midst of the literary movement of 1830. Verses of all sorts, dramas, comedies, poems, bubbled forth one after another from his seething brain : " La Cité des Hommes," " La Mort de Faust et de Don Juan," "Le Camp des Croisés," " Provence," " Mademoiselle de la Vallière," "L'Ecole des Familles," "Les Servitudes Volontaires," &c. But, just as in the army, though all may do their duty every one does not receive the Legion of Honour, in spite of his pluck and the comparative success of his plays in the Paris theatres, the poet Dumas, like our drummer-boy of Arcole, remained always the undecorated soldier. This it was, no doubt, which made him say later on in Provençal :

"At forty years and more, when every one is angling, still I dip my bread in the poor man's soup. Let us be content if we have a soul at peace, a pure heart and clean hands. 'What has he earned?' the world will ask, 'He carries his head erect.' 'What does he do?' 'He does his duty.'"

But if Dumas had gained no special laurels, he had won the esteem of the most distinguished brothers-in-arms, and Hugo, Lamartine, Béranger, De Vigny, the great Dumas, Jules Janin, Mignet, Barbey d'Aurevilly were among his friends.

Adolphe Dumas, with his ardent temperament, his experience of struggling days in Paris, and the memory of his childhood on the Durance, came to the determination to issue a passenger's ticket to Félibrige between Avignon and Paris.

My poem of Provence was at last finished, though not yet printed, when one day my friend Frédéric Legré, a young Marseillais who formerly frequented Font-Ségugne, said to me:

"I am going to Paris—will you come too?"

I accepted the invitation, and it was thus that on the spur of the moment, for the first time, I visited Paris, where I stayed one week. I had, needless to say, brought my manuscript, and after spending the first two days in sight-seeing

and admiring, from Notre-Dame to the Louvre, and from the Place Vendôme to the great Arc de Triomphe, we went, as was proper, and paid our respects to the good Dumas.

"Well, and that *Mireille*," he asked me, "is she finished?"

"She is finished," I said, "and here she is—in manuscript."

"Come now, since you are here, you will read me a song."

And when I had read the first canto, "Go on!" said Dumas.

I read the second, then the third, then the fourth canto.

"That is enough for to-day," said the good man. "Come to-morrow at the same time, we will continue the reading; but this much I may assure you," he added, "if your work keeps up to this level, you may win finer laurels than at present you have any idea of."

I returned the next day and read four more cantos, and the day after we finished the poem.

That same day (August 26, 1856) Adolphe Dumas wrote to the editor of the *Gazette de France* the following letter:

"The *Gazette du Midi* has already made known to the *Gazette de France* the arrival in Paris of

young Mistral, the poet of Provence. Who is this Mistral? No one knows anything of him. When I am asked, I answer fearing my words should find no credence, so surprising will be my statements at a time when the prevalence of imitation poetry makes one believe that all true poetry and poets are dead. In ten years' time the Academy will, when all the world has already done so, recognise another glory to French literature. The clock of the Institute is often an hour behind the century, but I wish to be the first to discover one who may be truly called the Virgil of Provence, and who, like the shepherd of Mantua, sings to his countrymen songs worthy of Gallus and of Scipio. Many have long desired for our beautiful country of the south, Roman both in speech and religion, the poem which shall express in her own tongue the sacred beliefs and pure customs of our land. I have the poem in my hands, it consists of twelve songs. It is signed Frédéric Mistral, of the village of Maillane, and I countersign it with my word of honour, which I have never given falsely, and with the full weight of my responsibility."

This letter was received with jeers by certain papers. "The mistral is incarnated, it appears, in a poem. We shall see if it will be anything except wind."

But Dumas, content with the effect of the bomb, said, clasping my hand :

"Now, my dear fellow, return to Avignon and get your *Mireille* printed. We have thrown down the glove, now let the critics talk. They must each one have their say in turn."

Before I left Paris my devoted compatriot wished to present me to Lamartine, his friend, and this is how the great man recounts the visit in his "Cours familier de Littérature" (quarantième entretien, 1859) :

"As the sun was setting, Adolphe Dumas entered my room, followed by a fine, modest-looking young man, dressed with a sober elegance which recalled the lover of Laura, when he brushed his black tunic and combed his smooth hair in the city of Avignon. It was Frédéric Mistral, the young village poet, destined to become in Provence, what Burns the ploughman was in Scotland, the Homer of his native land.

"His expression was straightforward, modest and gentle, with nothing in it of that proud tension of the features or of that vacancy of the eye which too often characterises those men of vanity rather than genius, styled popular poets. He had the comeliness of sincerity, he pleased, he interested, he touched; one recognised in his

masculine beauty the son of one of those beautiful Arlesiennes, living statues of Greece, who still move in our south.

"Mistral sat down without ceremony at my dinner-table in Paris, according to the laws of ancient hospitality, as I would have seated myself at the farm table of his mother at Maillane. The dinner was quiet, the conversation intimate and frank. The evening passed quickly and pleasantly in my little garden about the size of the kerchief of Mireille, to the song of blackbirds in the fresh cool night air.

"The young man recited some verses in the sweet nervous idiom of Provence, which combines the Latin pronunciation with the grace of Attica and the serenity of Tuscany. My knowledge of the Latin dialects, which I spoke up to the age of twelve in the mountains of my country, made these fine idioms intelligible to me. The verses of Mistral were liquid and melodious, they pleased without intoxicating me. The genius of the young man was not there, the medium was too restricted for his soul; he needed, as did Jasmin, that other singer of indigenous growth, his epic poem in which to spread his wings. He returned to his village, there at his mother's hearth and beside the flocks to find his last inspirations. On taking

leave, he promised to send me the first printed copy of his *Mireille*."

After this memorable occasion I paid my farewell respects to Lamartine. He lived at that time on the ground floor in the Rue de la Ville-l'Evêque. It was evening. Burdened with his debts and somewhat forsaken, the great man drowsed on a sofa, smoking a cigar, while some visitors spoke in low voices around him.

All at once a servant came to announce that a Spaniard, a harpist called Herrera, asked permission to play some of the music of his country before Monsieur de Lamartine.

"Let him come in," said the poet.

When the harpist had played his tunes, Lamartine, in a whisper to his niece, Madame de Cessia, asked if there was any money in the drawers of his bureau.

"There are still two louis," she replied.

"Give them to Herrera," said the kind-hearted Lamartine.

I returned to Provence to get my poem printed, and so soon as it issued from the printing office of Seguin at Avignon, I directed the first proof to Lamartine, who wrote to Reboul * the following letter :

* A well-known poet and writer of Nîmes, author of a small poem regarded as a classic in France : "L'Ange et l'Enfant."

"I have read *Mirèio*. Nothing until now has appeared of such national, vital, inimitable growth of the South. There is a virtue in the sun of Provence. I have received such a thrust both in the spirit and the heart that I was impelled to write a discourse on the poem. Tell this to Monsieur Mistral. Since the Homerics of Archipel, no such spring of primitive poetry has gushed forth. I cried, even as you did, 'It is Homer!'"

Adolphe Dumas wrote me:

March, 1859.

"Another joyful letter for you, my dear friend. I went, last evening, to Lamartine. On seeing me enter, he received me with exclamations of enthusiasm, using much the same expressions as I did in my letter to the *Gazette de France*. He has read and understood, he says, your poem from one end to the other. He read it and re-read it three times; he cannot leave it, and reads nothing else. His niece, that beautiful person whom you saw, added that she has been unable to steal it from him for one instant to read it herself, and he is going to devote an entire lecture to you and *Mirèio*. He asked me for biographical notes on you and on Maillane. I sent them to him this morning. You were the subject of general conversation all the evening, and your poem was rehearsed by Lamar-

tine and by me from the first word to the last. If this lecture speaks thus of you, your fame is assured throughout the world. He says you are 'A Greek of the Cyclades.' He has written of you to Reboul, 'He is a Homer.' He charges me to write you *all that I will*, and he added I cannot say too much, he is so entirely delighted. So be very happy, you and your dear mother, of whom I retain a charming remembrance."

I wish to record here a very singular fact of maternal intuition. I had given to my mother a copy of *Mirèio*, but without having spoken to her of Lamartine's opinion, of which I was still ignorant. At the end of the day, when I thought she had made acquaintance with the work, I asked her what she thought of it, and she answered me, deeply moved :

" A very strange thing happened to me when I opened thy book : a flash of light, like a star, dazzled me suddenly, and I was obliged to delay the reading until later ! "

One may believe it or no, but I have always thought that this vision of my beloved and sainted mother was a very real sign of the influence of Sainte-Estelle, otherwise of the star that had presided at the foundation of Félibrige.

The fortieth discourse of the "Cours familier de Littérature" appeared a month later (1859) under the title of "The Appearance of an Epic Poem in Provence." Lamartine devoted eighty pages to the poem of *Mireille*, and this glorification was the crowning event of the numberless articles which had welcomed the rustic epic in the press of Provence, of Languedoc, and of Paris. I testified my gratitude in the Provençal quatrain, which I inscribed at the head of the second edition.

TO LAMARTINE.

To thee alone *Mireille* I dedicate;
My heart, my soul, my flower, the best of me,
A bunch of Crau's sweet grapes and leaves, that late
A peasant offers thee.

September 8, 1859.

And the following is the elegy that I published on the death of the great man, ten years later (1869).

ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF LAMARTINE.*

When the day-star draws near to the hour of his setting,
When dusk clothes the hills, and the shepherds are letting
Their sheep and their herds and their dogs go free,
Then up from the marshlands, all groaning together,
Come the wails of the toilers through sweltering weather:
"That sunshine was nearly the death of me!"

* For Provençal text *see* p. 329.

Thou, of God's holy words the magnanimous preacher,
Even so, Lamartine, O my father, my teacher,
When by song, and by deed, and consoling tear,
Thou did'st lavish thy love and thy light unsparing,
Till the world had its fill, and the world, not caring,
Grew weary and sated, and would not hear:

Then each one his taunt through the mist must needs fling thee,
And each one a stone from his armoury sling thee:
Thy splendour but hurt us, and tired our sight;
For a star that grows dim and no longer can light them,
And a crucified god—these will ever delight them,
The ignorant crowd—and the toads love night.

Oh, then were there seen things prodigious, by Heaven!
Fresh youth to the soul of the world had he given,
He, of purest poesy mighty source;
Yet the new young rhymesters were moved to laughter
O'er his sadness prophetic, and said thereafter
"That he knew not the poet's art, of course!"

High-Priest of the great Adonaï, he raises
The soul of our creeds by the heavenly praises
He hymns on the strings of Sion's golden harp!
Yet, calling to witness the Scriptures proudly,
"A man irreligious" they dub him loudly,
The Pharisee bigots who mouth and carp.

He, the great, tender heart who has sung the disaster
Of our monarchs ancestral, and he, the master
Who with pomp of marble has built their tomb,
On him all the gapers who vow adoration
To the Royalist cause, have pronounced condemnation;
They call him insurgent—and give him room.

He, the voice apostolic, while all men wondered,
The great word "Republic" hath hurled and thundered
Across the world's skies, till the peoples thrilled!
Yet him, by a frenzy unspeakable smitten,
Have all the mad dogs of Democracy bitten,
And growled at him, snarled at him as they willed!

To the crater of fire, he, great patriot, had given
Wealth, body and soul, and his country had striven
To save from the burning volcano's flame;
Yet when, poor, he was begging his bread, all denied him,
The bigwigs and burghers as spendthrift decried him,
And, shut up in ease, to their boroughs came.

When he saw himself then in disaster forsaken—
With his cross, and by anguish and suffering shaken,
Alone he ascended his Calvary;
And at dusk some good souls heard a long, long sighing,
And then, through the spaces, this cry undying
Rang out: "Eloi, lama sabachthani."

But none dared draw nigh to that hill-top lonely,
So he waited in patience and silence only,
With his deep eyes closed and his hands spread wide;
Till, calm as the mountains at heaven's high portal,
Amidst his ill-fortune, and fame immortal,
Without ever speaking a word, he died.

(Trans. Alma Strettell.)

CHAPTER XVII

THE REVELS OF TRINQUETAILLE

(A REMINISCENCE OF ALPHONSE DAUDET)

ALPHONSE DAUDET, writing of his youth in the "Lettres de mon Moulin" and "Trente Ans de Paris," has told with the finest bloom of his pen some of the pranks he played with the early Félibres at Maillane, Barthelasse, Baux, and Châteauneuf—that first crop of Félibres who in those days ran about the country of Provence for the fun of running, to keep themselves going, and above all to stir up again in the hearts of the people the Gai-Savoir of the Troubadours. There is, however, one joyous day of adventure we spent together some forty years ago, of which Daudet has not told.

Alphonse Daudet was at that time secretary to the Duc de Morny, honorary secretary be it understood, for the utmost that the young man ever did was to go once a month to see if his patron, the President of the Senate, was flourishing and in a good temper. Amongst other exquisite things from his pen, Daudet had written a love-poem

called " Les Prunes." All Paris knew it by heart, and Monsieur de Morny, hearing it recited one evening in a drawing-room, requested the author might be presented to him, with the result that he took the young man under his patronage. To say nothing of his wit, which flashed like a diamond, Daudet was a handsome fellow, brown, with a clear skin and black eyes with long lashes, a budding beard and thick crop of hair which he allowed to grow so long that the Duke, every time the author of " Les Prunes " called on him at the Senate, would repeat, with disapproving finger pointing at the offending locks :

" Well poet—and when are we going to cut off this wig ? "

" Next week, Monseigneur," the poet invariably replied.

About once a month the great Duc de Morny made the same observation to the little Daudet, and every time the poet made the same answer. But the Duke himself was more likely to fall than Daudet's mane.

At that age the future chronicler of the prodigious adventures of Tartarin of Tarascon was a merry youth, who kept pace with the wind, impatient to know everything, an audacious Bohemian, frank and free with his tongue, throwing himself

headlong in the swim of life with laughter and noise, always on the look-out for adventures. He had quicksilver in his veins.

I remember one evening, when we were supping at the Chêne-Vert, a pleasant inn in the neighbourhood of Avignon, hearing music for a dance that was going on just below the terrace where we were dining. Daudet suddenly jumped down, a flying leap of some nine or ten feet, crashing through the branches of a vine trellis and landing in the midst of the dancers, who took him for a devil.

Another time, from the height of the road which passes at the foot of the Pont du Gard, he threw himself, without knowing how to swim, into the River Gardon, to see, so he said, if the water was deep. Had not a fisherman caught hold of him with his boathook, my poor Alphonse would most certainly have drunk what we call "the soup of eleven o'clock!"

Another time, on the bridge that leads from Avignon to the island of Barthelasse, he madly climbed on the narrow parapet, and racing along at the risk of tumbling over into the Rhône, he cried out, for the edification of some country people who heard him: "It is from here, by thunder! that we threw the corpse of Brune into the Rhône, yes, the Maréchal Brune! And may

it serve as an example to those northerners and barbarians if ever they return to annoy us!"

One day in September, at Maillane, I received a little note from friend Daudet, one of those notes minute as a parsley leaf, well known to all his friends, in which he said to me:

"My Frédéric,—To-morrow, Wednesday, I leave Fontvieille to come and meet thee at Saint-Gabriel. Mathieu and Grivolas will join us by the road from Tarascon. The place of meeting is the ale-house, where we shall await thee about nine o'clock or half-past. And there, at Sarrasine's, the lovely landlady of the place, having drunk a glass, we will set out on foot for Arles. Do not fail.

"Thy Red Hood."

On the day mentioned, between eight and nine o'clock, we all found ourselves at Saint-Gabriel, at the foot of the chapel which guards the mountain. At Sarrasine's, we drank a cherry brandy, and then—forward on the white road.

We inquired of a roadmender how far it was to Arles.

"When you get to the tomb of Roland," he answered, "you will still have two hours' walk."

We inquired where was the tomb of Roland.

"Down there where you see a group of cypresses on the banks of the Viqueirat."

"And this Roland, who was he?"

"He was, so they say, a famous captain of the time of the Saracens. . . . His teeth, I will wager, no longer hurt him."

Greetings to thee, Roland! We never expected, when we set out, to find still living, in the fields and meadows of Trebon, the legendary glory of the Companion of Charlemagne. But to continue. Just as the Man of Bronze struck twelve, gaily we descended upon Arles, entering by the Porte de la Cavalerie, all of us white with dust. As we had the appetite of Spaniards we went at once to breakfast at the Hôtel Pinus.

We were not badly served; and when one is young, making merry with friends and rejoicing to be alive, there is nothing like dining together for engendering high spirits.

There was one thing, however, which disturbed our equanimity. A waiter in a black coat, with pomaded head, and whiskers standing out like birch brooms, hovered perpetually around us, a napkin under his arm, never taking his eyes off us, and under pretext of changing our plates, listening eagerly to all our foolish talk.

"We must get rid of him. Here, waiter!" said Daudet.

The limpet approached. "Yes, sir?"

"Quick, fetch me a dish—a large silver dish."

"To place upon it?" inquired the waiter, puzzled.

"A jackanapes," replied Daudet in a voice of thunder.

The changer of plates did not wait for any more, and from that moment left us in peace.

"What I dislike about these hotels," said Mathieu, "is that since the commercial traveller introduced the northern fashions, whether at Avignon, Augoulême, Draguignan, or even at Brier-la-Gaillarde, they now all give you the same insipid dishes—carrot broth, veal and sorrel, roast beef half cooked, cauliflower with butter, and a variety of eatables with neither taste nor savour. In Provence, if you want to find the old-fashioned cooking of the country which was appetising and savoury, you must go to the little inn frequented by the country people."

"What if we go this evening," cried Grivolas the painter.

"Let us go," we all agreed.

We paid without further delay, lighted our cigars and sallied forth to take our cup of coffee in

a popular *café*, and then in the narrow streets, cool, and white with limestone, flanked by stately old houses on either side, we strolled about till the twilight fell, looking at the queenly Arlesienne beauties on their doorsteps or behind the transparent window curtains, for I must own they had counted considerably as a latent motive in our descent upon Arles.

We passed the Arena, its great gates wide open, and the Roman theatre with its two majestic columns. We visited Saint-Trophime and the cloisters, the famous Head without a Nose, the Palaces of the Lion, of the Porcelets, of Constantine, and of the Grand Prior.

Sometimes on the narrow pavement we ran up against a donkey belonging to some water-carrier selling water from the Rhône in barrels. We also encountered troops of sunburnt gleaners, newly returned from the country, carrying on their heads the heavy load of gleanings, and beside these the vendors of snails, shouting at the pitch of their voices:

"Who will buy fresh snails from the fields!"

About sunset we inquired of a woman, who stood just outside the fish-market knitting a stocking, if she could direct us to some little inn or tavern, unpretentious, but clean, where we could dine in simple apostolic fashion.

The woman, thinking we were joking, cried out

to her neighbours, who, at her shout of laughter, came to their doors coifed with the coquettish headgear of Arles.

"See, here are some gentlemen looking for a tavern at which to sup—do you know of one?"

"Send them," cried one, "to the Rue Pique-Monte."

"Or to the 'Little Cat,'" said another.

"Or to the 'Widow Come Here.'"

"Or to the Gate of the Chestnuts."

"Don't mock us, my dears," said I. "We want some quiet little place within the reach of anybody, where honest people go."

"Very well," said a fat man seated on a post, smoking his pipe, with a face coloured like a beggar's gourd, "why not go to Counënc's? See here, gentlemen, I will conduct you," he continued, rising and shaking out his pipe; "I have to go by that way. It is on the other side of the Rhône, in the suburb of Trinquetaille. It is not an hotel of the first order, my faith, but the watermen, the bargees and the boatmen who come from Condrieu, feed there and are not discontented. The owner is from Combs, a village near Beaucaire, which supplies some bargemen. I myself, who have the honour of addressing you, am master of a boat, and I have done my share of sailing."

We inquired if he had been far afield.

"Oh no," he replied, "I have only sailed in the small coasting trade as far as Havre-de-Grace, but it is a true saying that there is never a boatman who does not face danger—and for sure, had it not been for the Great Saintes-Maries, who have always protected me, there are many times, my friends, when we should have gone under."

"And they call you?"

"Master Gafet! Always at your service should you at any time run down to Sambuc or to Graz to see the vessels embedded in the sand at the river's mouth."

So, chatting pleasantly, we arrived at the bridge of Trinquetaille, at that time still a bridge of boats. As we passed over the moving planks which connected the chain of boats one felt beneath the heaving river, powerful and living, on whose mighty bosom one rose and sank as it drew breath. Having crossed the Rhône, we turned to the left on the quay, and there, beneath an old trellis, bending over the trough of the well, we saw—how shall I describe her?—a kind of witch, and one-eyed to boot, scraping and opening some lively eels. At her feet some cats were gnawing and fighting as she threw the heads down to them.

"That is 'La Counënque,'" announced Master Gafet.

It was somewhat of a shock to poets who, since early morn, had dreamed but of beautiful and noble Arlesiennes. But—here we were!

"Counënque, these gentlemen wish to sup here," said our guide.

"Are you daft then, Master Gafet? What the devil are you trying to saddle us with! You know I have nothing to set before that sort."

"See here, old idiot, hast not there a fine dish of eels?"

"Oh, if a hash of eels will make them happy! But mind you, we have nothing else."

"Ho!" cried Daudet, "nothing we like better than a hash. Come in—come in, and you, Master Gafet, please sit down with us."

Our friend Gafet willingly allowed himself to be persuaded, and we all five entered the tavern of Trinquetaille.

In a low room, the floor of which was covered with beaten clay, but the walls were very white, stood a long table whereat were seated from fifteen to twenty bargemen in the act of cutting a kid, the landlord Counënc supping with them.

From the beams of the ceiling, blackened by

smoke, hung flycatchers in the shape of tamarinds, where the flies settled and were afterwards caught in a bag. We sat down on benches at another table, opposite the bargemen, who, on seeing us, became silent.

While the hash was preparing on the stove, "La Counënque," to give us an appetite, brought some enormous onions, those grown at Bellegarde, a dish of Jamaica pepper in vinegar, some fermented cheese, preserved olives, botargo of Martinique, and slices of braised haddock.

"And thou who saidst there was nothing to eat!" cried Master Gafet, cutting the bread with his big hooked knife; "but it is a wedding feast!"

"By our Lady," answered the one-eyed, "if you had let us know beforehand, we might have prepared you a *blanquette à la mode* — or an omelette—but when people drop down on you in the twilight like a hair in the soup, you understand, gentlemen, one has to give them what one can."

Daudet, who in his whole life had never before seen such specimens of the Camargue, seized one of the onions—fine flat onions, golden as a Christmas loaf—and boldly crunched and swallowed it, leaf by leaf, with his fine strong teeth, to the accompaniment of some fermented cheese and haddock. It is only fair to mention we also did our best to

help him, while Master Gafet, raising every now and again the brimming jug of Crau wine, his face ablaze as I never saw the like.

"Oh these young bloods!" said he, "the onion makes one drink and keeps up the thirst."

In less than half an hour one could have lighted a match on any one of our cheeks. Then the hash (*catigot*) arrived, a dish in which a shepherd's crook could have stood upright, salted like the sea, and peppered like the devil.

"Salting and peppering make one find the wine very good," said the fat Gafet; "let us clink glasses, my boys."

The bargemen meantime, having finished their kid, ended their repast, as is the custom of the watermen of Condrieu, with a plate of fat soup. Each one poured a big glass of wine into his plate, then, lifting it with both hands, all together they drank off the mixture at one gulp, smacking their lips with pleasure. The master of a raft, who wore his beard like a collar, then sang a song which, if I remember, finished like this:

When our fleet arrives
On the way to Toulon,
We salute the town
With a roll of cannon.

"Thunder! but we must give them one back,"

cried Daudet. And he burst out with a chorus which referred to the time of the Civil War with the Vaulois :

To Lourmarin—Light-horseman
There they die !
To Lourmarin—Light-horseman
Quickly fly ! &c.

Then the men of the river, not to be outdone, responded with a chorus :

The maidens of Valence
Know naught of love's sweet way,
But those of fair Provence
Enjoy it night and day.

" Together now, boys," we cried to the singers. And in unison, making castanets of our fingers, we shouted with such full lungs that the one-eyed interrupted us :

" Shut up," said she, " if the police pass by they will have you up for brawling at nights."

" The police," we cried ; " we snap our fingers at them. " Here," added Daudet, " go and fetch the visitors' book."

The " Counënque " brought the book in which all who passed the night at the inn inscribed their names, and the polite secretary of Monsieur de Morny wrote in his best hand :

A. Daudet, Secretary of the President of the Senate.
F. Mistral, Chevalier of the Legion of Honour.
A. Mathieu, Félibre of Châteauneuf-du-Pape.
P. Grivolas, Master painter of the School of Avignon.

"And if any one," he continued, "if any one, O Counënque, should ever dare make trouble, be he commissioner, policeman or sub-prefect, thou hast only to place these inky spider's legs under his moustache. If after that he is not quieted, write to me in Paris and I wager I will make him dance."

We settled our bill, and accompanied by the admiring glances of all, we left with the air of princes who had just revealed their identity. Arrived at the footpath of the bridge of Trinquetaille:

"What if we danced a bit of a *farandole?*" proposed the indefatigable and charming novelist of the "Mule du Pape." "The bridges of Provence are only made for that."

So forward. In the clear, limpid light of the September moon, which was reflected in the water, behold us stepping gaily and singing on the bridge.

About midway across we saw advancing a procession of Arlesiennes, of delicious Arlesiennes, each one with her cavalier, walking and bowing, laughing and talking. The rustling of petticoats,

the *frou-frou* of silk, the soft murmurs of the happy couples as they spoke together in the peaceful night with the thrill of the Rhône that glided between the boats, was an emotional experience never to be forgotten.

"A wedding!" cried the fat Gafet, who had not yet left us.

"A wedding," echoed Daudet, who, with his short sight, only just perceived the advancing party. "An Arlesienne wedding! A moonlight wedding! A wedding in the middle of the Rhône!"

And taken with a sudden mad impulse, our buck sprang forward, threw himself on the neck of the bride, and kissed her with a will.

Then followed a pretty row! We were all in for it, and if ever we were hard put to it in our lives, it was certainly on that occasion. Twenty fellows with raised sticks surrounded us:

"To the Rhône with the rascals!"

"What is it all about?" cried Master Gafet, pushing back the crowd. "Can't you see we have been drinking? Drinking to the health of the bride in the Trinquetaille, and that to commence drinking again would do us harm?"

"Long live the bridal couple!" we all exclaimed. And thanks to the valiant Gafet, whom every one

knew, and to his presence of mind, the thing ended there.

The next question was where to go next ? The Man of Bronze had just struck eleven o'clock. We decided to make the tour of the Aliscamps.*

Passing down the Lice d'Arles we went the round of the ramparts, and by the light of the moon descended the avenue of poplars leading to the cemetery of the old Arles of the Romans. And while wandering amongst the tombs and sarcophagi, showing white on either side in long rows, we solemnly chaunted the fine ballad by Camille Reybaud :

The poplars growing in the churchyard here
Salute the dead that in these graves abide—
If thou the sacred mysteries dost fear
Oh never pass the churchyard by so near !

The long, white grave-stones in the churchyard here
Have flung their heavy covers open wide.
If thou the sacred mysteries, &c. &c.

---

* Les Aliscamps, the famous burying-ground of the Romans. In the old pagan days it was said that this wonderful necropolis made Arles, the queen of cities, more opulent beneath her soil than above. Here the great Romans in the time of Augustus and Constantine regarded it as their privilege to be buried.—C. E. M.

Upon the greensward in the churchyard here
The dead men all stand upright side by side.
If thou the sacred mysteries, &c. &c.

They all embrace within the churchyard here,
These mute and silent brothers who have died.
If thou the sacred mysteries, &c. &c.

'Tis keeping holiday, the churchyard here,
And dancing to and fro the dead men glide.
If thou the sacred mysteries, &c. &c.

Across the churchyard now the moon shines clear;
Each maiden seeks her love, each lad his bride.
If thou the sacred mysteries, &c. &c.

No more they find them, in the churchyard here,
Their loves of yore, that would not be denied.
If thou the sacred mysteries, &c. &c.

Oh open me the churchyard wicket wide!
Let my love in, to comfort them that died! . . .

(Trans. Alma Strettell.)

Suddenly, from a yawning tomb three paces from us, we heard in dolorous sepulchral tones these words:

"Let sleep in peace those who sleep!"

We remained petrified, and all around us in the moonlight a deep silence reigned.

At last Mathieu said softly to Grivolas:

"Didst thou hear?"

"Yes," replied the painter, "it is down there, in that sarcophagus."

"Eh," cried Master Gafet, bursting into laughter, "that is a 'dressed sleeper,' as we call them in Arles, one of those vagrants who come to lodge at night in the empty tombs."

"What a pity," cried Daudet, "that it was not a real ghost! Some beautiful vestal, who at the voice of the poets was roused from her sleep, and, Oh, my Grivolas, wished to rise up and embrace thee!"

Then in a resounding voice he sang, and we all joined in:

"De l'abbaye passant les portes
Autour de moi, tu trouverais
Des nonnes l'errante cohorte
Car en suaire je serais!"

"O Magali, si tu te fais
La pauvre morte
La terre alors je me ferais
Là je t'aurai!"

After which we all shook hands with Master Gafet and made our way quickly to the railway station, there to take the train for Avignon.

Seven years later, the year, alas! of the great catastrophe, I received this letter:

"PARIS, *December* 31, 1870.

"MY CHIEFTAIN,—I send thee, by the balloon just rising, a heap of kisses. And it gives me pleasure to be able to send them in the language of Provence, for so I am assured that the Barbarians, should this balloon fall into their hands, cannot read a word of my writing, nor publish my letter in their *Mercure de Souabe*. It is cold, it is dark: we eat horse, cat, camel, and hippopotamus! Ah, for the good onions, the *catigot*, and fermented cheese of the tavern of Trinquetaille!

"The guns burn our fingers. Wood is becoming scarce. The armies of the Loire come not! But that does not matter—we will keep the cockroaches from Berlin wearing themselves out for some time yet in front of our ramparts. . . . And then if Paris is lost, I know of some good patriots who are ready to take Monsieur de Bismarck round the little streets of our poor capital. Farewell, my chief—three big kisses, one from me, one from my wife, and the other from my son. With that a happy New Year as always, until this day next year. Thy Félibre,

"ALPHONSE DAUDET."

And then they dare to say that Daudet is not a

good Provençal! Just because he jokes and ridicules the Tartarins, the Roumestans, and Tante Portals, and other imbeciles of this country, who try to Frenchify the language of our Provence. For that Tartarin owes him a grudge!

No! The mother lioness is not angry, and will never be angry, with the young lion who, in fighting, sometimes gives her a scratch.

Paul. Mariéton, Chancelier des Félibres.

APPENDIX

THE following extract, translated from the biographical notice of Frédéric Mistral, written for "La Grande Encyclopédie" by Monsieur Paul Mariéton, for many years Chancelier des Félibres and a French poet and writer of note, takes up the history of Félibrige where the Memoirs leave off:

The unanimity of votes accorded to *Mireille* * by the members of the French Academy set the seal of sanction to the Provençal Renaissance, and reinforced Mistral himself with faith and resolution to carry out his mission. Up till that time he had said truly, as in the opening strophe of *Mireille*, that he "sang only for the shepherds and people of the soil!"—"What will they say at Arles?" was his one thought as he wrote *Mireille*. But before the completion of his epic

* *Mireille* was crowned by the Academy, and the poet received a prize of ten thousand francs.

his ambition for his native tongue had widened. The notes in the Appendix and the French translation published with the Provençal testify to this fact. Already he was beginning to realise the leading part he was about to play in the society founded at Font-Ségugne. The school of Roumanille, of which, in virtue of *Mireille*, Mistral was now chief, added to its members daily.

The rules of the language were now fixed, the language of the Félibres, and thanks to *L'Armana* (an annual publication initiated and edited by Roumanille) were little by little adopted by the people. This classic vulgate—with which Mistral, by pruning and enriching his native dialect, had, like another Dante, dowered his country—had become immortal, having given birth to a masterpiece. It now remained to give a national tendency to the movement. It was by raising the ambitions of a race, and annexing the sympathy of the "Félibres" among them, by showing them their ancestry from remotest times, and bringing to light their inalienable rights, that Mistral evolved out of a literary renaissance a great patriotic cause.

With his *Ode aux Catalans* (1859) and his *Chant de la Coupe*, Mistral sealed the alliance between the Provençals and the Catalans, their brethren

both of race and tongue. This was ratified when in 1868 Mistral, together with Roumieux, Paul Meyer, and Bonaparte Wyse, met at the Barcelona fête in response to the call of the Catalonians.

SONG OF THE CUP.*

Men of Provence, this Cup has come to us
Pledge of our Catalonian brothers' troth,
Then let us each in turn drain from it thus
The pure wine of our native vineyard's growth.

O sacred cup
Filled brimming up!
Pour out to overflowing
Enthusiasms glowing,
The energy pour out that doth belong
Of right unto the strong.

Of an ancestral people proud and free
Perchance we are the end, we faithful few:
And should the "Félibres" fall, it well may be
The end and downfall of our nation too.

O sacred cup, &c.

Yet, in a race that germinates again
We are perchance the first-fruits of our earth,
We are perchance the pillars that maintain,
The knights that lead, the country of our birth.

O sacred cup, &c.

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* For Provençal text *see* p. 332.

Pour out for us the golden hopes once more,
The visions that our youth was wont to see,
And, with remembrance of the days of yore,
Faith in the days that are about to be.
O sacred cup, &c.

Pour for us, mingled with thy generous wine,
Knowledge of Truth and Beauty, both in one,
And lofty joys and ravishments divine
That laugh at Death and bid its fears begone.
O sacred cup, &c.

Pour out for us the gift of poesy,
That all things living we may fitly sing;
The only true ambrosial nectar she
That changes man, to god transfiguring.
O sacred cup, &c.

Ye that at last with us consenting are,
Now for the glory of this land most dear,
O Catalonian brothers, from afar
Unite with us in this communion here.
O sacred cup, &c.

(Trans. Alma Strettell.)

Thus little by little the Félibrige, first started by Roumanille and promoted by his political pamphlets, his Christmas Songs and Popular Tales, was developed by Mistral into a national movement. This was shown clearly in his second important work, *Calandal*, a poem in twelve cantos (1867), which from that time divided the honours with *Mireille*.

The two poems were in striking contrast one to the other. *Mireille* depicted the Provence of the Crau and the Camargue, *Calandal* the Provence of the mountains and the sea. *Mireille* was virgin honey, *Calandal* the lion's mane. In the latter poem, Mistral attempted to give perhaps too much local colour to please the general public, in spite of the incomparable style. The reception of this work by the Félibres, however, was enthusiastic, the heroic symbolism and eloquence of the poet, speaking in the name of all vindicators of his race, gave birth to a set of mystic patriots and created the Félibréen religion.

Little by little, thanks to the vital impulse given by Mistral, Félibrige crossed the Rhône. After having aroused some fervent proselytes, such as Louis Roumieux and Albert Arnavielle at Nîmes and Alais, it resulted at Montpellier in the inauguration of the "Society for studying Ancient Languages," under the auspices of Baron de Tourtoulon. The work of this group scientifically justified the raising and purifying of the Oc language. Strengthened by the support of the learned and lettered officials, up to that period refractory, the Félibrige movement, already Provençal and Catalan, now became Latin also.

The memorable occasion of the Centenary

Fête of Petrarch in 1874 at Avignon, presided over by Aubanel and initiated by Monsieur de Berluc-Perussis, was the first international consecration of the new literature and of the glory of Mistral.

A large assembly of the philological Société Romane in 1875, followed by the Latin Fêtes at Montpellier in 1876, at which the young wife of the poet was elected Queen of the Félibres, definitely confirmed the importance of a poetic renaissance which the author of *Mireille* and *Calandal* had developed from a small intimate society into a wide social movement.

Three years previously (1875) the intellectual sovereignty of Mistral had impressed itself on all the south of France by the publication of his collected poems "Lis Isclo d'Or" ("The Golden Isles") which revealed the serene genius of the master, his extraordinary versatility and his unquestionable title to represent his race.

Shortly after, at Avignon, the poet was proclaimed Grand Master (*Capoulié*) of the literary federation of the Meridional provinces, and became the uncontested chief of a crusade of the Oc country for the reconquest of its historic dignity and position.

The sort of pontificate with which Mistral was from henceforth invested in no way arrested the

outflowing of his songs. A new poem, *Nerto*, lighter in form than hitherto, in the style of the romantic epics of the renaissance, suddenly drew the attention of the critics again to the poet of Provence, and the charm and infinite variety of his genius.

Having already compared him to Homer, to Theocritus, and to Longus, they now found in his work the illusive seduction of Ariosto. A visit that he paid to Paris in 1884, after an absence of twenty years, sealed his fame in France and his glory in Provence. He was surrounded by an army of followers. Paris, which knew hitherto only the poet, now recognised a new literature in the person of its chief. The French Academy crowned *Nerto* as before they had crowned *Mireille*. Mistral celebrated there in the French capital the fourth centenary of the union of Provence and France ; " as a joining together of one principality to another principality," according to the terms of the ancient historical contract.

He returned to his Provence consecrated chief of a people. The Provençal Renaissance continued to extend daily. Mistral endowed the movement at last with the scientific and popular weapon essential for its defence, a national dictionary. It was the crowning work of his life,

"The Treasury of Félibrige." All the various dialects of the Oc language are represented in this vast collection of an historic tongue, rich, melodious, vital, rescued and reinstated by its indefatigable defenders at a moment when all conspired to hasten its decrepitude.

All the meanings and acceptations, accompanied by examples culled from every writer in the Oc language, every idiom and proverb, are patiently collected together in this encyclopædic *tresaurus* which could never be replaced.

The Institute awarded him a prize of four hundred francs.

In 1890 Mistral published a work he had for some time contemplated, *La Rèino Jano* (*Queen Joan*) a Provençal tragedy. In spite of the rare beauty and picturesque eloquence of many of the cantos, this poem, evoking as it does the Angevine Provence of the fourteenth century, obtained only half the success of *Nerto* from the public. The French do not share with the Félibres the cult of Queen Joan.

If this essentially national tragedy was judged in Paris a merely moderately good drama, it must be remembered that the Parisians did not take into account the familiar popularity which Mistral knew to exist for his heroine among his own people.

While awaiting the production of *Queen Joan* at the Roman Theatre of Orange, restored by the Félibres, Mistral continued the active side of his work.

The spreading of the movement on all sides called for more influential organs than either the Almanac or the annual publication. After having contributed for forty years to the *Armana* and having presided at the inauguration of the Félibréen Review in 1885, he became principal editor in 1890 of a Provençal paper in Avignon, *L'Aioli*, which under his auspices became the quarterly monitor of Félibrige.

While still retaining the leadership of the movement, Mistral published here and there sundry chapters of his Memoirs, also exhortations to his people, lectures, poems, and chronicles.

In 1897 he published another poem, like the former seven years in the making, *Le Poème du Rhône*. It is the most delicate and most ingenuously epic of his productions. Above all, he showed in this work his profound symbolism, revealed not only in the depth and breadth of his thought, but in the originality of his versification. Taking the traditions of the country, he has woven them into the winding silk cord of the living, glistening, eternal Rhône, this poem of

the river's course. He has inspired his people to restore the honour of these traditions by the radiant example and fruitful labour of his own life.

The Memoirs best reveal the deep roots of his patriotism. In describing his harmonious existence, the master relates his experience both as a celebrated writer and as a Provençal farmer. Portraits of great men and of great peasants stand out in his record. One can judge of him as a prose writer by the Tales and Addresses appearing here and there during a period of forty years, pages which often equalled in beauty the finest songs of the poet. His letters also, which sowed unceasingly the good grain of the Renaissance, will, when published one day, show even better than the translation of his verse what a great writer the French have in Mistral.

His life after all has been his finest poem. In order to bring about the realisation of his ideal, the raising of his country, he has in turn shown himself poet, orator, philologist, and, above all, patriot. The "new life" that his work has infused into the body of Félibrige has not only regenerated his own Provence by erecting a social ideal, it has also promoted the diffusion of a

patriotic sentiment which has become general throughout France, and which may be defined as federalism or simply decentralisation. The ideas of Mistral on this subject of local centres permitting the free expansion of individual energies are well known. It can only be accomplished, according to his theory, by a new constituency, the electors of the existing system being too taken up organising the redivision of the departments to enter into other questions. But he has always refused to become the leader of a political movement. "He who possesses his language holds the key which shall free him from his chains," Mistral has always said, meaning thereby that in the language dwells the soul of a people. Thus restricting himself to the leadership of a linguistic movement he desired to remain always a poet. It is the purity of his fame which has given such power to his position. By the charm of his personality he won large crowds, just as by his writings he charmed the lettered and the educated. For he was always possessed by a profound belief in the vitality of his language and faith in a renewal of its glory, and absolutely opposed in this respect to Jasmin, who invariably proclaimed himself as the last of the poets of the Oc tongue. If Mistral is not the only worker in the Provençal

Renaissance, it is at all events owing to his genius that the movement took wing and lived. Before he arose the ancient and illustrious Oc language was in the same deplorable condition as were the Arenas of Nîmes and of Arles at the beginning of the century. Degraded, unsteady, enveloped by parasite hovels, their pure outline was being obliterated by the disfiguring leprosy. One day came reform, and, taking control, swept away the hovels and rubbish, restoring to their bygone splendour these amphitheatres of the old Romans.

Even so, barbarous jargons had defaced the idiom of Provence. Then with his following of brilliant and ardent patriots Mistral came and dispersed the degenerating *patois*, restoring to its former beauty the Greek purity of form belonging to the edifice of our ancestors and fitting it for present use. PAUL MARIÉTON.

Every year in May, on the Feast of Sainte-Estelle, the four branches of Félibrige are convoked to important assizes at some place on Provençal soil. At the end of the banquet which follows the floral sports, and after the address of the chief, the latter raises high the Grail of the poetic mysteries, and intones the *Song of the Cup*. The hymn of the faith and cause of the race is taken up gravely

Madame Gasquet (née Mlle. Girard), 3rd Queen of the Félibres.

and the refrain joined in by all the company. Then the cup goes round fraternally and each member, before touching it with his lips, in turn rehearses his vow of fidelity.

The assizes of Sainte-Estelle are followed by a meeting of the consistory, who elect the new members. The consistory is composed of a chief or *capoulié*, of a chancellor, and fifty senior members chosen from among the four branches. Every branch, Provence, Languedoc, Aquitaine, and the affiliated branch of La Catalogne, is presided over by its own syndicate, and nominates an assistant to the *capoulié*. Félibrige numbers to-day many thousand members, without counting the foreign associations in other parts of France, such as the Félibres of the west, inaugurated by Renan in 1884, and the Cigales of Paris, first started by the Provenceaux of that city, as Paul Arène declared:

"Pour ne pas perdre l'accent, nous fondâmes la Cigale. . . ."

The classic cicada is now the badge of the Order and is worn by all members at their fêtes.

Every seven years takes place a great meeting and floral feast, on which occasion three first prizes are awarded for poetry, prose, and Félibréen work, and a Queen of Félibrige is elected.

Their queen presides at the principal assizes of the cause. The first to be chosen was Madame Mistral, the young wife of the chief, at Montpellier in 1878. The second was Mademoiselle Thérèse Roumanille (Madame Boissière), daughter of the poet. The third was Madame Gasquet, *née* Mademoiselle Girard; and the fourth and present queen is Madame Bischoffsheim, *née* Mademoiselle de Chevignè. A procession of Félibresses form an escort to the reigning queen.

The Provençal Renaissance has counted many distinguished women writers and poets among its members. Among the first of these *trouveresses* were Madame Roumanille, wife of the poet, whose work was crowned at the Fête of Apt in 1863; Madame d'Arband (1863); Mademoiselle Riviére, whose "Belugo" was sung by all our leaders (1868); Madame Lazarin Daniel, Félibresse of the Crau; Madame Gautier-Brémond of Tarascon, celebrated for her "Velo-blanco" (1887); not to mention the many whose names in recent years have been an honour to the cause.

It was on the occasion of the Fête at Montpellier, May 25, 1878, that the "Hymne à la Race Latine" was recited on the Place du Peyron, that song which has since become a national possession and pride.

TO THE LATIN RACE.*

Arise, arise renewed, O Latin race,
Beneath the great cope of thy golden sun
The russet grape is bubbling in the press,
And gushing forth the wine of God shall run.

With hair all loosened to the sacred breeze
From Tabor's Mount—thou art the race of light,
That lives of joy, and round about whose knees
Enthusiasm springs, and pure delight;
The Apostolic race, that through the land
Sets all the bells a-ringing once again;
Thou art the trumpet that proclaims—the hand
That scatters far and wide the bounteous grain.

Arise, arise renewed, O Latin race, &c.

Thy mother-tongue, that mighty stream that flows
Afar through seven branches, never dies;
But light and love outpouring, onward goes,
An echo that resounds from Paradise.
O Roman daughter of the People-King,
Thy golden language, it is still the song
That human lips unceasingly shall sing—
While words yet have a meaning—ages long.

Arise, arise renewed, &c.

* For Provençal text *see* p. 334.

Thy blood illustrious on every side
Hath been outpoured for justice and for right ;
Thy mariners across the distant tide
Have sailed to bring an unknown world to light.
A hundred times the pulsing of thy thought
Hath shattered and brought low thy kings of yore ;
Ah ! but for thy divisions, who had sought
Ever to rule thee, or to frame thy law !

Arise, arise renewed, &c.

Kindling thy torch at radiances divine
From the high stars, 'tis thou hast given birth,
In shapes of marble and in pictured line,
To Beauty's self, incarnate upon earth.
The native country thou of god-like Art,
All graces and all sweetness come from thee,
Thou art the source of joy for every heart,
Yea, thou art youth, and ever more shalt be.

Arise, arise renewed, &c.

With thy fair women's pure and noble forms
The world's pantheons everywhere are stored ;
And at thy triumphs, yea, thy tears, thy storms,
Men's hearts must palpitate with one accord ;
The earth's in blossom when thy meadows bloom,
And o'er thy follies every one goes mad ;
But when thy glory is eclipsed in gloom
The whole world puts on mourning and is sad.

Arise, arise renewed, &c.

Thy limpid sea, that sea serene, where fleet
The whitening sails innumerable ply,
That crisps the soft, wet sand about thy feet,
And mirrors back the azure of the sky,
That ever-smiling sea, God poured its flood
From out His splendour with a lavish hand,
To bind the brown-hued peoples of thy blood
With one unbroken, scintillating band.

Arise, arise renewed, &c.

Upon thy sun-kissed slopes, on every side
The olive grows, the tree of peace divine,
And all thy lands are crownèd with the pride
Of thy prolific, broadly-spreading vine.
O Latin race, in faithful memory
Of that thy glorious, ever-shining past,
Arise in hope toward thy destiny,
One brotherhood beneath the Cross at last!

Arise, arise renewed, O Latin race,
Beneath the great cope of thy golden sun!
The russet grape is bubbling in the press,
And gushing forth the wine of God shall run!

(Trans. Alma Strettell.)

To conclude with the words of Mistral quoted from one of his addresses:

"If thou wouldst that the blood of thy race maintain its virtue, hold fast to thy historic tongue. . . . In language there lies a mystery, a precious treasure. . . . Every year the nightingale renews his feathers, but he changes not his note."

C. E. MAUD.

MISTRAL'S POEMS IN THE PROVENÇAL

GREVANÇO

II

(*From* " Lis Isclo d'Or.")

Oh ! vers li plano de tousello
Leissas me perdre pensatiéu,
Dins li grand blad plen de rousello
Ounte drouloun iéu me perdiué !

Quaucun me bousco
De tousco en tousco
En recitant soun angelus ;
E, cantarello,
Li calandrello
Iéu vau seguènt dins lou trelus . .

Ah ! pauro maire,
Bèu cor amaire,
Cridant moun noum t'ausirai plus !

LES SAINTES-MARIES (*Mireille*).

Nautre, li sorre emé li fraire
Que lou seguian pèr tout terraire,
Sus uno ratamalo, i furour de la mar,
E sènso velo e sènso remo,

Fuguerian embandi. Li femo
Toumbavian un riéu de lagremo ;
Lis ome vers lou cèu pourtavon soun regard.

Uno ventado tempestouso
Sus la marino sóuvertouso
Couchavo lou batèu : Marciau e Savournin
Soun ageinouia sus la poupo ;
Apensamenti, dins sa roupo
Lou viéi Trefume s'agouloupo ;
Contro éu èro asseta l'evesque Massemin.

Dre sus lou tèume, aquéu Lazàri
Que de la toumbo e dóu susàri
Avié'ncaro garda la mourtalo palour,
Sèmblo afrounta lou gourg que reno :
Em'éu la nau perdudo enmeno
Marto sa sorre, e Madaleno,
Couchado en un cantoun, que plouro sa doulour.

Contro uno ribo sènso roco,
Alleluia ! la barco toco ;
Sus l'areno eigalouso aqui nous amourran
E cridan tóuti : Nòsti tèsto
Qu'as póutira de la tempèsto,
Fin-qu'au coutèu li vaqui lèsto
A prouclama ta lèi, o Crist ! Te lou juran !

A-n-aquèu noum, de jouïssènço,
La noblo terro de Prouvènço
Parèis estrementido ; à-n-aquéu crid nouvèu,
E lou bouscas e lou campèstre
An trefouli dins tout soun èstre,
Coume un chin qu'en sentènt soun mèstre
Ié cour à l'endavans e ié fai lou bèu-bèu.

La mar avié jita d'arcèli . . .
Pater noster, qui es in cœli,—
A nosto longo fam mandères un renos ;
A nosto set, dins lis engano
Faguères naisse uno fountano ;
E miraclouso, e lindo, e sano,
Gisclo enca dins la glèiso ounte soun nòstis os !

MAGALI.

O Magali, ma tant amado,
Mete la tèsto au fenestroun !
Escouto un pau aquesto aubado
De tambourin e de viòuloun.

Es plen d'estello, aperamount !
L'auro es toumbado,
Mai lis estello paliran,
Quand te veiran !

—Pas mai que dóu murmur di broundo
De toun aubado iéu fau cas !
Mai iéu m'envau dins la mar bloundo
Me faire anguielo de roucas.

—O Magali ! se tu te fas
Lou pèis de l'oundo,
Iéu, lou pescaire me farai,
Te pescarai !

—Oh ! mai, se tu te fas pescaire,
Ti vertoulet quand jitaras,
Iéu me farai l'aucèu voulaire,
M'envoularai dins li campas.

Madame Bischoffsheim (née Mlle. de Chevigné),
4th and present Queen of the Félibres.

—O Magali, se tu te fas
L'aucèu de l'aire,
Iéu lou cassaire me farai,
Te cassarai.

—I perdigau, i bouscarido,
Se vènes, tu, cala ti las,
Iéu me farai l'erbo flourido
E m'escoundrai dins li pradas.

—O Magali, se tu te fas
La margarido,
Iéu l'aigo lindo me farai,
T'arrousarai.

— Se tu te fas l'eigueto lindo,
Iéu me farai lou nivoulas,
E lèu m'enanarai ansindo
A l'Americo, perabas !

— O Magali, se tu t'envas
Alin is Indo,
L'auro de mar iéu me farai,
Te pourtarai !

— Se tu te fas la marinado,
Iéu fugirai d'un autre las :
Iéu me farai l'escandihado
Dóu grand soulèu que found lou glas !

— O Magali, se tu te fas
La souleiado,
Lou verd limbert iéu me farai,
E te béurai !

— Se tu te rèndes l'alabreno
Que se rescound dins lou bartas,
Iéu me rendrai la luno pleno
Que dins la niue fai lume i masc !

— O Magali, se tu fas
Luno sereno,
Iéu bello nèblo me farai,
T'acatarai.

— Mai se la nèblo m'enmantello,
Tu, pèr acò, noun me tendras ;
Iéu, bello roso vierginello,
M'espandirai dins l'espinas !

— O Magali, se tu te fas
La roso bello,
Lou parpaioun iéu me farai,
Te beisarai.

— Vai, calignaire, courre, courre !
Jamai, jamai m'agantaras :
Iéu, de la rusco d'un grand roure
Me vestirai dins lou bouscas.

— O Magali, se tu te fas
L'aubre di mourre,
Iéu lou clot d'èurre me farai,
T'embrassarai !

— Se me vos prene à la brasseto,
Rèn qu'un vièi chaine arraparas . . .
Iéu me farai blanco moungeto
Dóu mounastié dóu grand Sant Blas !

— O Magali, se tu te fas
Mounjo blanqueto,
Iéu, capelan, counfessarai,
E t'ausirai !

— Se dóu couvènt passes li porto,
Tóuti li mounjo trouvaras
Qu'à moun entour saran pèr orto,
Car en susàri me veiras !

— O Magali, se tu te fas
La pauro morto,
Adounc la terro me farai,
Aqui t'aurai !

— Aro coumence enfin de crèire
Que noun me parles en risènt.
Vaqui moun aneloun de vèire
Per souvenènço, o bèu jouvènt !

— O Magali, me fas de bèn ! . . .
Mai, tre te vèire,
Ve lis estello, o Magali,
Coume an pali !

SOULOMI.

SUS LA MORT DE LAMARTINE.

Quand l'ouro dóu tremount es vengudo pèr l'astre,
Sus li mourre envahi pèr lou vèspre, li pastre
Alargon sis anouge e si fedo e si can ;
E dins li baisso palunenco
Lou grouün rangoulejo en bramadisso unenco :
" Aquéu soulèu èro ensucant ! "

Di paraulo de Diéu magnanime escampaire,
Ansin, o Lamartine, o moun mèstre, o moun paire,
En cantico, en acioun, en lagremo, en soulas,
Quand aguerias à noste mounde
Escampa de lumiero e d'amour soun abounde,
E que lou mounde fuguè las,

Cadun jitè soun bram dins la nèblo prefoundo,
Cadun vous bandiguè la pèiro de sa foundo,
Car vosto resplendour nous fasié mau is iue,
Car uno estello que s'amosso,
Car un diéu clavela, toujour agrado en foço,
E li grapaud amon la niue . . .

E'm'acò, l'on veguè de causo espetaclouso !
Eu, aquelo grand font de pouësio blouso
Qu'avié rejouveni l'amo de l'univers,
Li jóuini pouèto riguèron
De sa malancounié proufetico, e diguèron
Que sabié pas faire li vers.

De l'Autisme Adounai éu sublime grand-prèire
Que dins sis inne sant enaurè nòsti crèire
Sus li courdello d'or de l'arpo de Sioun,
En atestant lis Escrituro
Li devot Farisen cridèron sus l'auturo
Que n'avié gens de religioun.

Eu, lou grand pietadous, que, sus la catastrofo
De nòstis ancian rèi, avié tra sis estrofo
E qu'en mabre poumpous i'avié fa'n mausoulèu,
Dóu Reialisme li badaire
Trouvèron á la fin qu'èro un descaladaire,
E tóuti s'aliunchèron lèu.

Eu, lou grand óuratour, la voues apoustoulico,
Que faguè dardaia lou mot de Republico
Sus lou front, dins lou cèu di pople tresanant,
Pèr uno estranjo fernesio
Tóuti li chin gasta de la Demoucracio
Lou mourdeguèron en renant.

Eu, lou grand ciéutadin que dins la goulo en flamo
Avié jita soun viéure e soun cors e soun amo,
Pèr sauva dóu voulcan la patrio en coumbour,
Quand demandè soun pan, pechaire !
Li bourgés e li gros l'apelèron manjaire,
E s'estremèron dins soun bourg.

Adounc, en se vesènt soulet dins soun auvàri,
Doulènt, emé sa crous escalè soun Calvàri . . .
E quàuqui bònis amo, eiça vers l'embruni.
Entendeguèron un long gème,
E pièi, dins lis espàci, aqueste crid suprème :
Heli ! lamma sabacthani !

Mai degun s'avastè vers la cimo deserto . . .
Emé li dous iue clin e li dos man duberto,
Dins un silènci grèu alor éu s'amaguè ;
E, siau coume soun li mountagno,
Au mitan de sa glòri e de sa malamagno,
Sènso rèn dire mouriguè.

LA COUPO

Prouvençau, veici la coupo
Que nous vèn di Catalan :
A-de-rèng beguen en troupo
Lou vin pur de noste plant !

Coupo santo
E versanto,
Vuejo à plen bord,
Vuejo abord
Lis estrambord
E l'enavans di fort !

D'un vièi pople fièr e libre
Sian bessai la finicioun ;
E, se toumbon li Felibre,
Toumbara nosto nacioun.

Coupo santo, &c.

D'uno raço que regreio
Sian bessai li proumié gréu ;
Sian bessai de la patrio
Li cepoun emai li priéu.

Coupo santo, &c.

Vuejo-nous lis esperanço
E li raive dóu jouvènt,
Dóu passat la remembranço
E la fe dins l'an que vèn.

Coupo santo, &c.

Vuejo-nous la couneissènço
Dóu Verai emai dóu Bèu,
E lis àuti jouïssènço
Que se trufon dóu toumbèu.

Coupo santo, &c.

Vuejo-nous la Pouësio
Pèr canta tout ço que viéu,
Car es elo l'ambrousio
Que tremudo l'ome en diéu.

Coupo santo, &c.

Pèr la glòri dóu terraire
Vautre enfin que sias counsènt,
Catalan, de liuen, o fraire,
Coumunien tóutis ensèn !

Coupo santo
E versanto,
Vuejo à plen bord,
Vuejo abord
Lis estrambord
E l'enavans di fort !

A LA RAÇO LATINO.

(PEÇO DICHO A MOUNT-PELIÉ SUS LA PLAÇO DÓU PEIROU, LOU 25 DE MAI DE 1878.)

Aubouro-te, raço latino,
Souto la capo dóu soulèu !
Lou rasin brun boui dins la tino,
Lóu vin de Diéu gisclara lèu.

Emé toun péu que se desnouso
A l'auro santo dóu Tabor,
Tu siés la raço lumenouso
Que viéu de joio e d'estrambord ;
Tu siés la raço apoustoulico
Que sono li campano à brand :
Tu siés la troumpo que publico
E siés la man que trais lou gran.

Aubouro-te, raço latino, &c.

Ta lengo maire, aquéu grand flume
Que pèr sèt branco s'espandis,
Largant l'amour, largant lou lume
Coume un resson de Paradis,
Ta lengo d'or, fiho roumano
Dóu Pople-Rèi, es la cansoun
Que rediran li bouco umano,
Tant que lou Verbe aura resoun.

Aubouro-te, raço latino, &c.

Toun sang ilustre, de tout caire,
Pèr la justiço a fa rajòu ;
Pereilalin ti navegaire
Soun ana querre un mounde nòu ;
Au batedis de ta pensado
As esclapa cènt cop ti rèi . . .
Ah ! se noun ères divisado
Quau poudrié vuei te faire lèi ?

Aubouro-te, raço latino, &c.

A la belugo dis estello
Abrant lou mou de toun flambèu,
Dintre lou mabre e sus la telo
As encarna lou subre-bèu.
De l'art divin siés la patrio
E touto gràci vèn de tu ;
Siés lou sourgènt de l'alegrio
E siés l'eterno jouventu !

Aubouro-te, raço latino, &c.

Di formo puro de ti femo
Li panteon se soun poupla ;
A ti triounfle, à ti lagremo
Tóuti li cor an barbela ;
Flouris la terro, quand fas flòri ;
De ti foulié cadun vèn fòu ;
E dins l'esclùssi de ta glòri
Sèmpre lou mounde a pourta dòu.

Aubouro-te, raço latino, &c.

Ta lindo mar, la mar sereno
Ounte blanquejon li veissèu,
Friso à ti pèd sa molo areno
En miraiant l'azur dóu cèu.
Aquelo mar toujour risènto,
Diéu l'escampè de soun clarun
Coume la cencho trelusènto
Que dèu liga ti pople brun.

Aubouro-te, raço latino, &c.

Sus ti coustiero souleiouso
Crèis l'óulivié, l'aubre de pas,
E de la vigno vertuiouso
S'enourgulisson ti campas :
Raço latino, en remembranço
De toun destin sèmpre courous,
Aubouro-te vers l'esperanço,
Afrairo-te souto la Crous !

Aubouro-te, raço latino,
Souto la capo dóu soulèu !
Lou rasin brun boui dins la tino,
Lou vin de Diéu gisclara lèu !

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